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Group Emotional Intelligence (GEI) Survey

Technical Manual

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Background of Group Emotional Intelligence Theory

The theory of Group Emotional Intelligence (GEI) was developed by Vanessa Urch Druskat and Steven B. Wolff. The following references provide an in-depth discussion of the theory (Druskat & Wolff, 2001a, 2001b; Wolff, Druskat, Koman, & Messer, 2006).

Summary of the theory

Group Emotional Intelligence is based Daniel Goleman’s (1995) framework of awareness and regulation of emotion at multiple levels but it should not be confused with individual emotional intelligence. The “intelligence” in a group comes from the patterns of behavior, or norms, that develop as the group goes about its task. Group Emotional Intelligence is a group-level construct and is very different from the individual-level emotional intelligence of group members.

Group Emotional Intelligence represents the ability of a group to generate a set of norms that guide the emotional experience in a group in an effective way. There are norms that guide the group’s interaction with: its members (individual-level), the group as a whole (group-level), and others outside the group (cross-boundary level). At each of these levels there are norms that create awareness of emotion in the group and norms that regulate group behavior. The nine norms that make up a group’s emotional intelligence are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Group Emotional Intelligence Norms

3 Levels	6 Dimensions	9 Norms
Individual	Group awareness of members	Interpersonal understanding
	Group management of members	Confronting members who break norms
		Caring Behavior
Group	Group self-awareness	Team self-evaluation
	Group self-management	Creating resources for working with emotion
		Creating an affirmative environment
	Proactive problem solving	
Cross-boundary (External)	Group social awareness	Organizational understanding
	Group management of external relationships	Building external relationships

It is important to note that each norm by itself is not necessarily focused on emotion. Each norm, however, does guide behavior in the group that has emotional outcomes. For example,

the degree to which members in the group make an effort to understand one another (Interpersonal Understanding) affects the emotional ties that develop among members and among each member and his or her identification with the group.

Individual-Level Norms

At the individual level, the norm of Interpersonal Understanding helps the group become aware of its members' needs, perspectives, and emotions. The norms of Confronting Members Who Break Norms and Caring Behavior help guide the group's behavior toward its members.

- *Interpersonal Understanding*—this norm represents the degree to which a group attempts to understand the needs, perspectives, skills, and emotions of its members. The strength of this norm relates to the degree to which members build bonds among themselves and the degree to which members identify with the group.
- *Confronting Members Who Break Norms*—this norm represents the degree to which a group addresses member behavior that goes against agreed upon norms or is harmful to group effectiveness. This norm requires skills of empathy, self-control, and persuasion to carry it out effectively. It must also be coupled with the norm of Caring Behavior. This norm contributes to a sense of efficacy in the group. When group members know that disruptive behavior will be confronted, they feel more confident in the group to accomplish its task.
- *Caring Behavior*—this norm represents the degree to which a group treats its members with respect, supports them, seeks their perspective, and validates their efforts. It does not imply that team members must like each other or socialize with each other. The strength of this norm affects the degree to which members build bonds and identify with the team. It also contributes to a sense of safety in the group.

Group-Level Norms

At the group level, the norm of Team Self-Evaluation helps the group become aware of how well it is working and the general mood in the group. The norms of Creating Resources for Working with Emotion, Creating an Affirmative Environment, and Proactive Problem Solving guide the group's behavior in a way that helps them address challenges in a way that creates positive energy yet avoids distorting the reality of the situation.

- *Team Self-Evaluation*—this norm represents the degree to which a group is aware of how it is performing, its collective moods, and seeks information to help it evaluate how well it is working. This norm has emotional consequences in that it can create emotional threats. The next three norms help determine how well the group deals with the emotional threats. One key to an effective group is to have a good sense of reality and not shy away from it when it gets emotionally threatening.
- *Creating Resources for Working with Emotion*—this norm represents the degree to which a group provides resources for the group to address emotions, e.g., time and a language for talking about emotions.

- *Creating an Affirmative Environment*—this norm represents the degree to which a group stays positive and optimistic in the face of challenges. This norm has emotional consequences because the degree to which members of the group remain optimistic will affect their sense of efficacy and will minimize the sense of threat caused by the challenge.
- *Proactive Problem Solving*—this norm represents the degree to which a group anticipates problems and takes action to prevent them as well as taking responsibility and working hard to address challenges. This norm has emotional consequences similar to that of Creating an Affirmative Environment. The greater the degree to which a group takes control of solving its problems the greater will be its sense of efficacy and the less threatening challenges will feel to group members.

Cross-Boundary-Level Norms

At the cross-boundary level the norm of Organizational Understanding helps the group become aware of the needs and concerns of those outside the group and understand how its work fits into the organization. The norm of Building External Relations guides the group's behavior based on their understanding of the organization.

- *Organizational Understanding*—this norm represents the degree to which a group seeks to understand the needs and concerns of those outside the group as well as the impact of its work and how it contributes to the organization's goals. This norm has emotional consequences related to the relationship of the group to decision makers and other groups. To build ties with others outside the group it is first necessary to understand them.
- *Building External Relations*—this norm represents the degree to which a group actively and strategically builds relationships with other people and groups who can affect their performance and provide resources. This norm has emotional consequences in that it builds bonds with others outside the group as well as evokes cooperation and attracts resources that help the team accomplish its goals. This leads to a sense of efficacy.

Development of the survey

Our initial work identified 13 norms (see Druskat et al., 2001a) that represented the set of behaviors observed in emotionally competent groups. The items in the current version of the survey represent a process of continual refinement based on previous research. Based on Christina Hamme's (2003) work as well as early work of Druskat and Wolff, the number of norms was cut from 13 to 9. Also based on this work and feedback from participants, items were reworded to improve clarity and relevance of the items. Finally, some items were deleted based on a factor analysis if they did not load on the appropriate factor.

Using the GEI Survey

The GEI survey has two primary uses: team development and research. This section is intended to help you use the survey appropriately.

Number of Team Members

The GEI survey is a group-level measure. This means that most of the members need to fill out the survey for the information to be considered a valid measure of Group Emotional Intelligence. We generally insist on a minimum of 75%-80% of the group members before we consider the survey valid.

How Norms Develop

Group emotional intelligence is a set of norms that develop as group members interact with each other. When working with a group it is important to recognize that developing group emotional intelligence is most effectively done as the group engages in its task. Group norms develop as a result of the actions or inactions of team members. Thus, the results of the survey can be used to help team members focus their behavior as they go about their work. You should not attempt to develop group emotional intelligence in an atmosphere that is divorced from the actual work. Such norms will be less likely to guide team member behavior when they go back to their normal work situation.

Differences in perspectives

The Group Emotional Intelligence survey will provide an average score representing a composite of the member's perceptions of their team. When working with a team it is important to recognize that the differences in perception can be as important as the overall average scores. The results of the survey include information about the distribution of responses. Although this information is critical to help the group understand its members and become aware of differences in perception, you should be careful to avoid the trap of allowing the group to attempt to identify who provided any particular response. If this information is divulged it should come voluntarily and spontaneously from the members without them being coaxed.

Reliability

Chronbach's alpha reliability for each of the Group Emotional Intelligence Norms is shown in Table 2. The sample is based on a database of 473 Team Members comprising 91 teams. The reliabilities range from a high of .884 for the norm of Interpersonal Understanding to a low of .740 for the norm of Creating Resources for Working with Emotion. The average reliability for all eight norms is .823.

Table 2: Reliability of GEI Norms

GEI Norm	Cronbach's Alpha
Interpersonal Understanding	.884
Confronting Members Who Break Norms	.854
Caring Behavior	.877
Team Self-Evaluation	.808
Creating Resources for Working with Emotion	.740
Creating an Optimistic Environment	.819
Proactive Problem Solving	.755
Organizational Awareness	.834
Building External Relations	.839

Validity

Validity of an instrument refers to the degree to which the instrument actually measures what it is intended to measure. Criterion validity is the degree to which the measure predicts expected outcomes. Construct validity is the degree to which the measure is associated with constructs that are theoretically related. A number of studies have been conducted to assess the validity of the overall theory. Although some of the research presented used earlier variations of the final GEI survey, the current version of the survey has been refined and upgraded based on experience gained from initial research. As such, the measurement of the various GEI Norms has become more precise, thus, the instrument has become even better at measuring the GEI Norms when compared to the versions used in early research.

GEI and Group Performance in MBA Students

Druskat and Wolff conducted a study consisting of 382 full-time MBA students comprising 48 teams. Students remained together for an entire year. The purpose of the study was to examine the hypothesis that Group Emotional Intelligence is related to group performance. One GEI norm from each of the six categories was measured in this study using an early version of the GEI survey. The norms studied were Interpersonal Understanding, Confronting Members Who Break Norms, Team Self-Evaluation, Proactive Problem Solving, Organizational Understanding, and Building External Relations.

Group performance was measured via a questionnaire given to the instructor. Performance was measured once at the end of the first semester and again at the end of the second semester. The first measurement was approximately one month after the measurement of GEI.

Although Team Self-Evaluation was significantly connected to performance at Time 1, by Time 2 this was no longer the case. Since each team conducted a formal peer feedback exercise after the Time 1 performance measurement, all teams essentially engaged in team self-evaluation before Time 2, thus, it no longer distinguished performance of the teams.

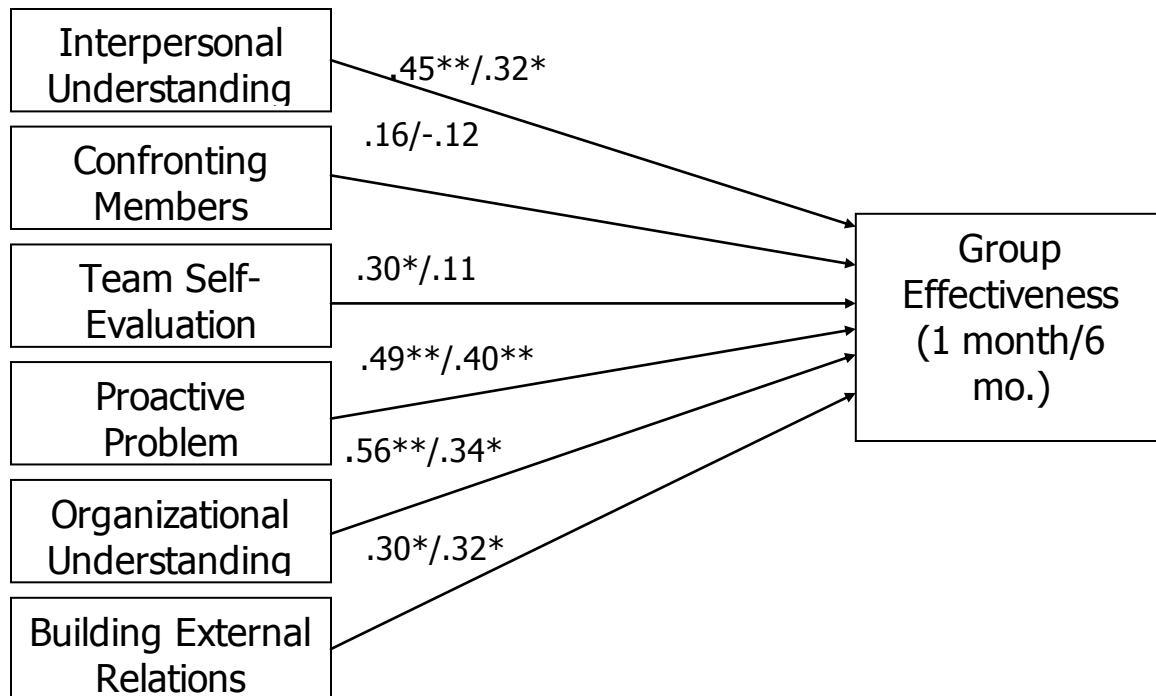
Figure 1 shows the results of this study. At Time 1 all GEI norms studied show a relation to group effectiveness except Confronting Members Who Break Norms. At Time 2 all GEI norms studied show a relation to group effectiveness except Confronting Members Who Break Norms and Team Self-Evaluation.

Druskat and Wolff have subsequently studied Confronting Members Who Break Norms in more depth. Their findings show that the relationship is a quadratic one, which is why a linear test does not show significance. Furthermore, they also found that the ability of a group to effectively use the norm of Confronting Members requires a degree of skill, thus, those teams with high levels of skills such as empathy, self control, and persuasion are able to effectively use the norm whereas teams low in these skills are not.

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Figure 1: Results showing relation of GEI norms to group effectiveness in MBA students

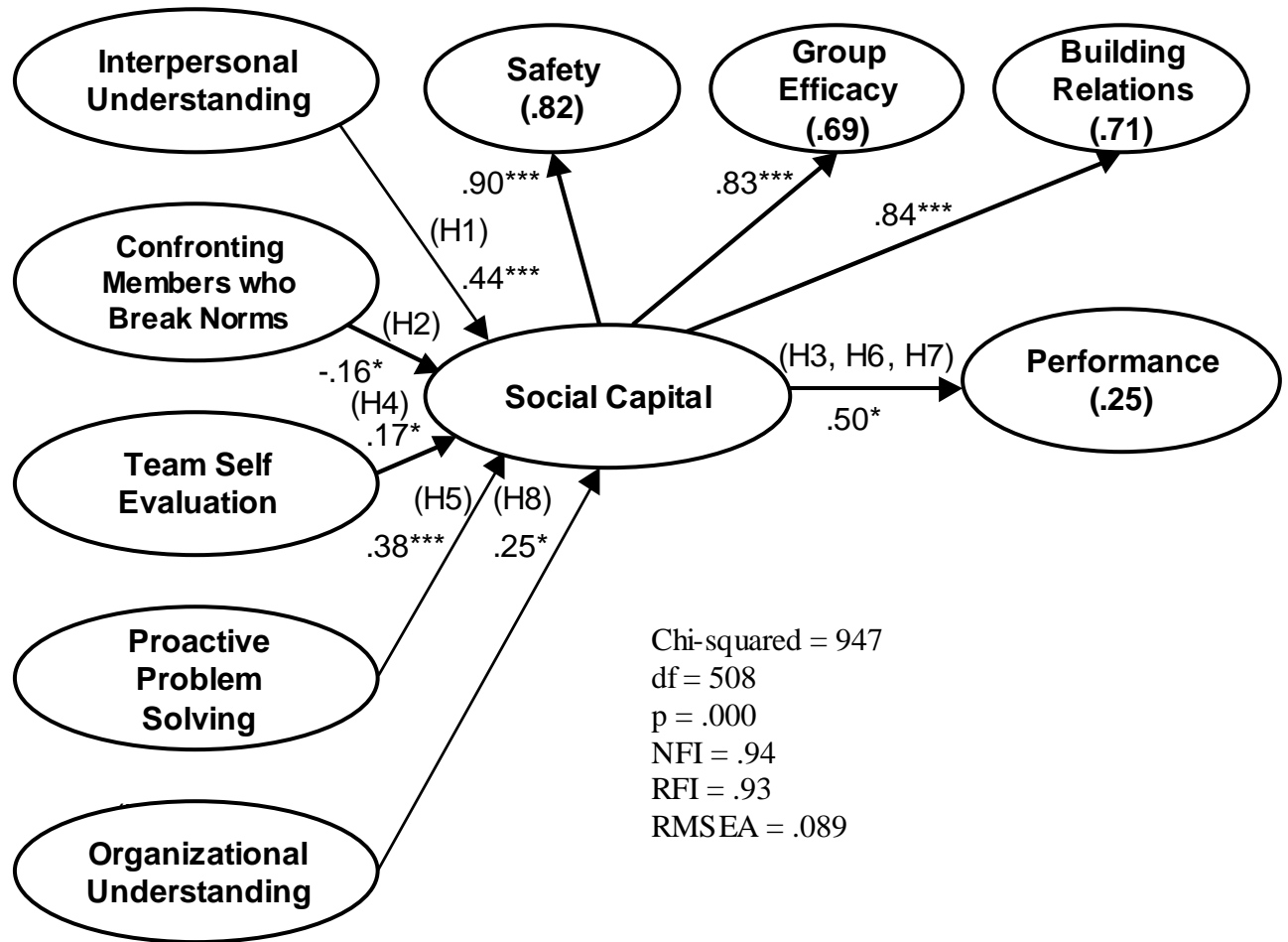


GEI, Social Capital, and Group Performance in Fortune 500 Companies

Wolff, Druskat, Koman, and Messer (2006) conducted a study of 109 teams in 6 companies (4 Fortune 500). The purpose of the study was to examine social capital as a mediating variable between Group Emotional Intelligence and performance as predicted by the theory. Group Emotional Intelligence was measured by an early version of the current GEI survey. Performance was measured via the manager’s assessment using a survey administered an average of 2.25 months after Group Emotional Intelligence was assessed.

Figure 2 shows the results of the study. The Group Emotional Intelligence norms studied predicted social capital as indicated by safety, efficacy, and building relations. Social capital then predicted performance. The model explained 25% of the variance in performance and was a good fit to the data. Note, building relations was included as social capital because a review of the items in the scale showed they were more indicative of networking, which is a social capital element. The survey has been subsequently modified as a result of these observations.

Figure 2: Results showing relation among GEI, Social Capital, and Performance



Note: Numbers in parentheses represent squared multiple correlations. This is similar to r-squared and represents a measure of the variance explained by the model for the particular construct. Not shown but included in the model are covariances among the GEC norms and the measurement model. Social Capital is a combination of Safety, Group Efficacy, and Building External Relations (which we considered a proxy for network ties).

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Emotional Intelligence, Group Emotional Intelligence, and the Performance of Military Air Crews

Stubbs (2005) examined the relationship between a team leader's emotional intelligence and the development of emotionally competent group norms (ECGN). She also examined the relation between ECGN and group performance. Stubbs hypothesized that the individual emotional intelligence of the team leader would influence the development of group emotional intelligence at the group level.

Stubbs (2005) studied 422 people in 81 teams in a military organization. The results, using structural equation modeling, show that team leader emotional intelligence is significantly related to the presence of emotionally competent group norms in the teams they lead, and that emotionally competent group norms are related to team performance. Team leader emotional intelligence was also found to have a direct effect on team performance.

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