

# **Building The Emotional Competencies Of Organizations**

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## **Introduction**

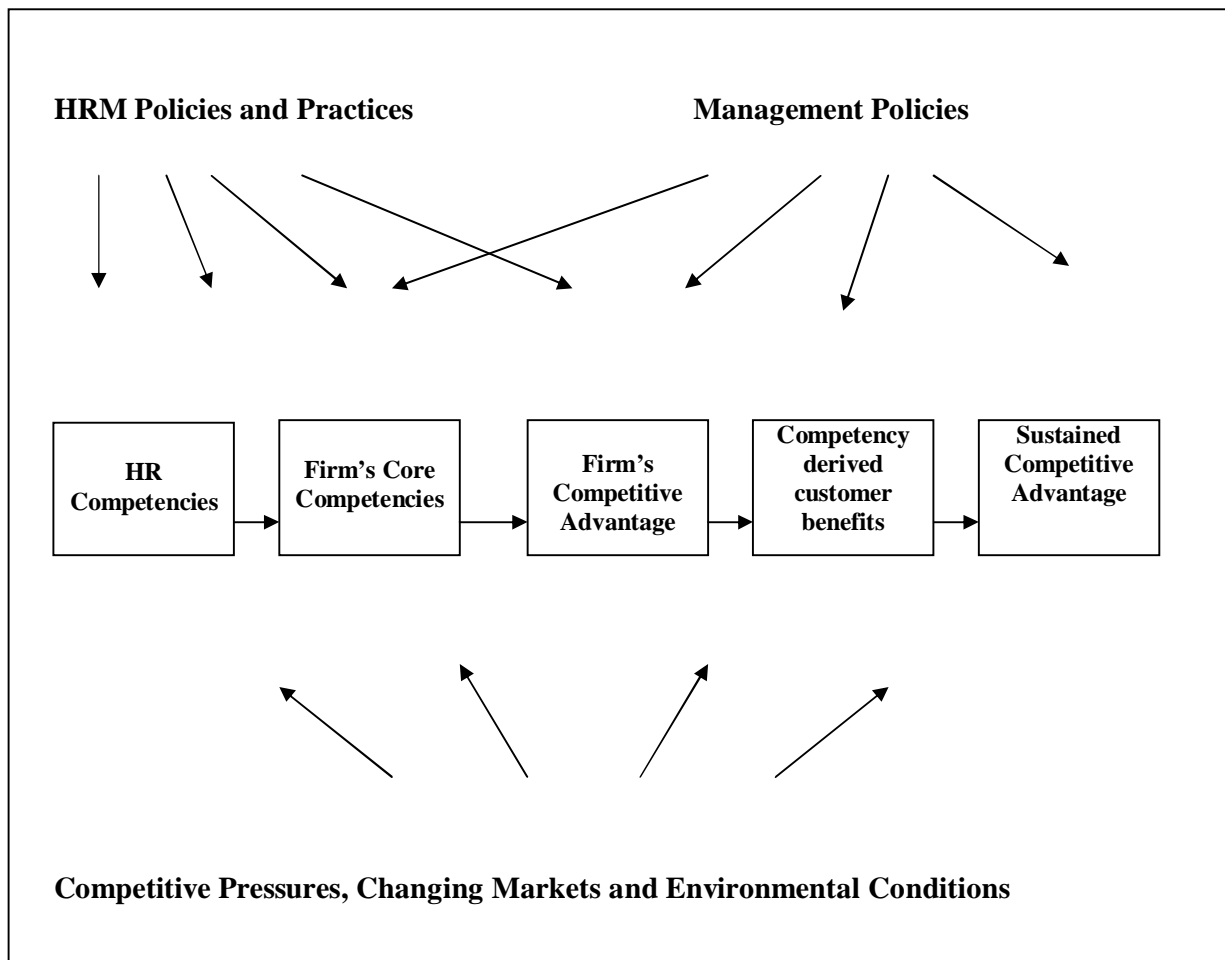
In the last fifteen years, two major trends have taken place in the area of human resources management (HRM). The first is the discovery of core competence as a source of the competitive advantage of organizations. Although the competence movement in the area of HRM started earlier, its recent linkage to the strategic or core competence gave it a strong impetus. The second is the emergence of emotional intelligence as an area capturing growing research interest in psychology, management, and organizational behavior. There is a need to link and integrate the two trends.

The potential impact and synergy of integrating these trends is great. The objective of the present paper is twofold: (1) to review the key literature on competence and emotional competence in particular, and (2) to link the two trends and extend the analysis to the total organization by showing how various types of emotional competencies impact on its excellence and effectiveness.

## **A Competence-Based Framework**

Since the early 1990's, much writings in the areas of strategy and human resources management (HRM) have been asserting that human resources are key sources of competitive advantage. Some have argued that they are the only source for such advantage in the long run. According to this view, competitive advantage comes out of HR capability represented by any combination of specific, inherent, integrated and applied knowledge, skills aptitudes, motivation and attitudes. Competitiveness drives from the ability of the firm to build core competence, at lower cost and more speedily than competitors. This competence may even stretch the firm beyond current configurations of products and markets, and beyond current resources and capabilities resulting in innovation and unanticipated products (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990, 1993, 1994). It involves dynamic capabilities to address changing environments through capacity to renew competences. Consequently HRM can be valued not only for its

role in implementing a given strategy framework, but for its potential to create a "human resource advantage" through policies and practices that enhances and retains, present and future human competencies and link them to the firm's current and future core competency (Dyer,1993; Boxal,1996).Within this context different HRM policies could be considered as different means to develop the different core competencies management aims at: selection and development policies as tools for generating competences, appraisal and rewards policies as tools for reinforcing competences, organization design and communication as tools for sustaining competences (Ulrich and Lake,1990). HRM practices are, in essence, the drivers of efforts to create distinctive competences and, in turn, business strategies (Hefter, 1996). The following figure represents the role of HRM in creating the strategic competence of the firm. This role becomes even greater in complex, dynamic and competitive environment. Core competence is internally-driven advantage(s). It is driven basically by the HR capabilities or competencies.



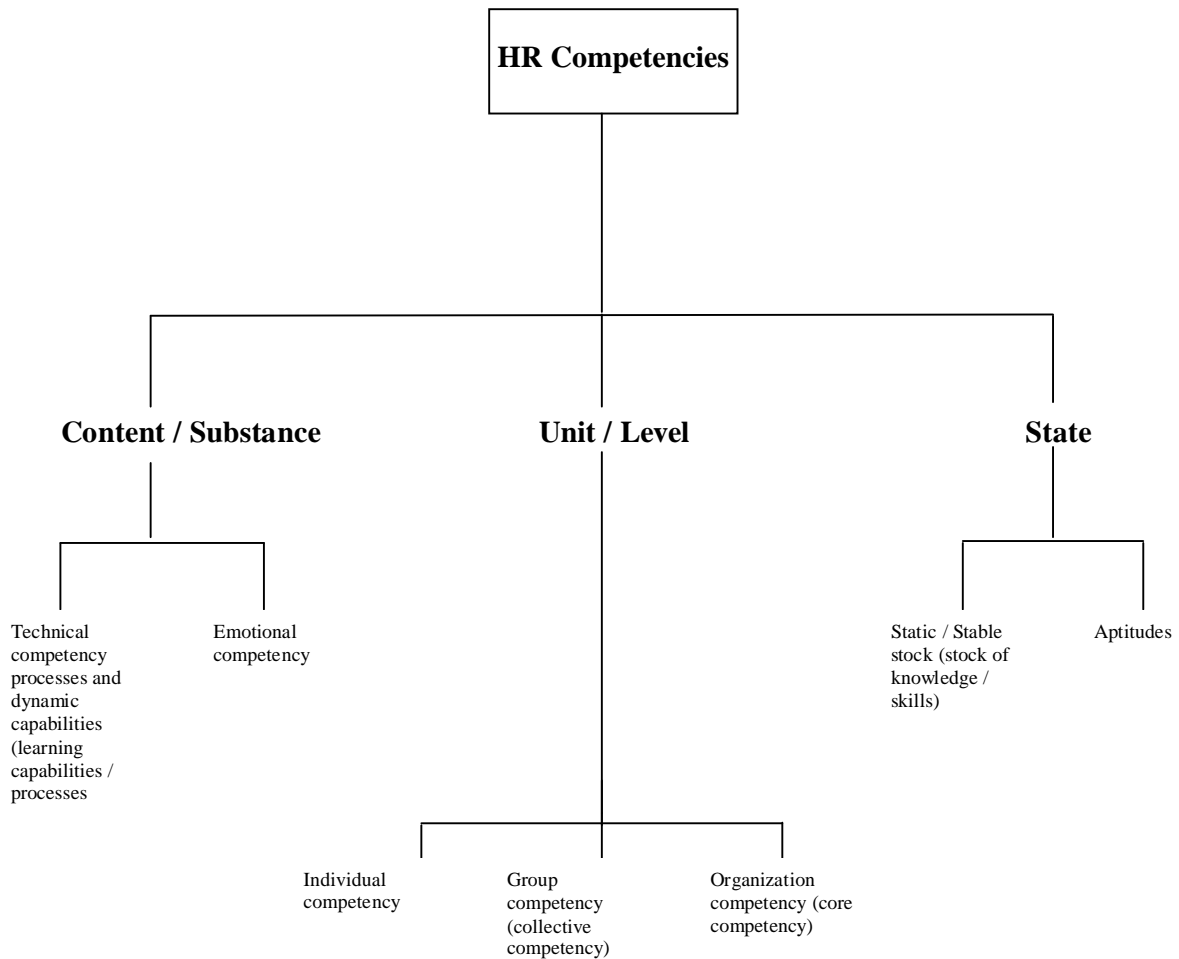
Source: Author's formulation

It is within this context that one should consider competency to be the contribution of HR competencies to the organization's competitive advantage. In fact this is the only and sure way to link any competency-based HRM system to company success, be it performance management, training and development, recruitment or compensation and rewards.

The term “competency” has come to replace skills and other attributes. The latter are characteristics of the individuals and groups. A competency is a characteristic or action that contributes and determines performance excellence from the stand point of the organization. Some have confined competencies to defining the abilities needed to adequately perform the role. The contemporary view classifies HR competencies into:

- Technical knowledge and skills.
- Emotional abilities and attitudes.
- Individual competencies.
- Group and collective competencies.
- Stock of knowledge and skills and emotional social experience.
- Aptitudes and dynamic capabilities.

The following is a representation of the above classification:



Source: Author's formulation

**Technical Competency:** Technical competency underlies the knowledge and skills described in observable and measurable terms that are necessary in order for an employee or a group of employees to successfully perform a particular type or level of work activity. Technical competencies typically reflect the abilities acquired through education, work experience and training.

**Emotional Competency:** Emotional competency underlies the emotional and social abilities and skills described in observable and measurable terms that are necessary for an employee to effectively engage in and perform well in social and interpersonal setting and in tasks requiring emotional maturity. It applies also to effective group

actions requiring harmony, empathy, shared feelings and mutual understanding. It relates to the much needed skills required for providing emotional support, engaging in collaborative work, performing well under stressful emotional conditions, and generating collective enthusiasm needed for group innovation and perseverance.

**Individual Level Competency:** An Individual Level Competency is an ability/skill required for successful task/job performance of an individual employee in his/her job role.

**Group Level Competency:** A Group Level Competency is a capability required for successful collaborative performance of a team or a group of individuals. Such performance may require effective and speedy communication, information sharing, joint learning/problem solving, collaborative work and social support.

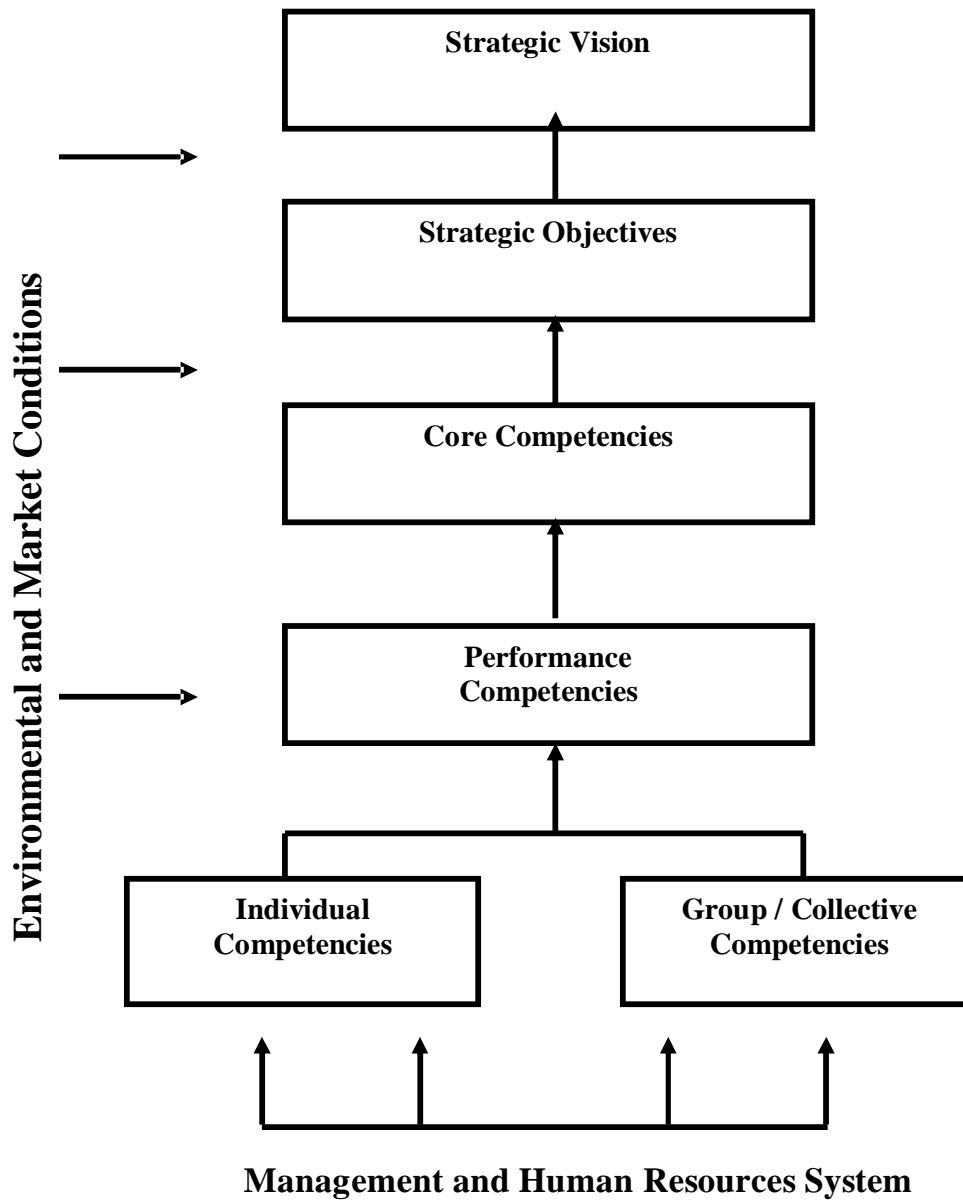
**Organization Level Competency:** This is the resultant of the collective competencies of individuals and groups that make up the core competency for organization. It provides the organization with the ability to succeed in a competitive environment.

**Static / Stock of Competencies:** When a competency is viewed as a stock of knowledge and skills or the repertoire of behaviours needed for successful performance, the focus here would be on the elements of a competency as stable composites or behavioural substances. The degree to which the person exhibits these behaviours are indicative of the level of possessing the competency. The underlying assumption here is that the performance demands and the job role are rather stable and static. This is so when the job consists of a set of routines (e.g. book keeping).

**Dynamic / Process Competency:** The focus here is on the process by which the individual or the group respond to the changing role demands and the dynamic environmental conditions to achieve performance excellence. Individual creativity and group / organizational learning are broad categories of the adaptive competency processes involved. This type of dynamic aptitudes and capabilities play a critical role in determining performance excellence in a highly changing and competitive environment such as that of the telecommunication sector.

## Strategic Competence Framework

The following figure represents a framework for linking core strategic competencies to individual and group competencies.



Source: Author's formulation

## **The Nature of Emotional Competence**

David McClelland (1975) was the first to propose the concept of competence as the basis for distinguishing outstanding from average performers at work. He later (1998) reviewed data from more than thirty organizations and for executive positions in many professions, from banking and managing to mining geology, sales and health care. He demonstrated that a wide range of emotional intelligence (EI) competencies (and a narrow range of cognitive ones) distinguished top performers from average ones.

Goleman (1998) defines emotional competency as a learned capability based on EI that results in outstanding performance at work. He differentiates between emotional intelligence, which is a set of emotional abilities that enable the individual to learn emotional skills, and emotional competency (EC) which represent learned abilities. The first represents a potential or aptitude, and the second represents a realized job skill. An underlying EI ability is necessary, though not sufficient, to manifest EC.

Goleman (2001), suggested a framework of ECs based on four basic abilities of EI that determine the potential for the practical skills underlying the on-the-job emotional capabilities or competencies. The framework contains twenty competencies nest in four clusters of general EI abilities. His model/ framework reflects empirical findings and theoretical analysis (Boyatzis, Goleman & Rhee, 2000) The following figure contains the framework of ECs suggested by Goleman (2001).

	<b>Self</b> <b>(Personal Competence)</b>	<b>Others</b> <b>(Social competence)</b>
<b>Recognition</b>	<u>Self Awareness</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional self-awareness</li> <li>• Accurate self-assessment</li> <li>• Self confidence</li> </ul>	<u>Social Awareness</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Service orientation</li> <li>• Organizational awareness</li> </ul>
<b>Regulation</b>	<u>Self Management</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional self-control</li> <li>• Trustworthiness</li> <li>• Conscientiousness</li> <li>• Adaptability</li> <li>• Achievement drive</li> <li>• Initiative</li> </ul>	<u>Relationship Management</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing others</li> <li>• Influence</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Conflict management</li> <li>• Visionary leadership</li> <li>• Catalyzing change</li> <li>• Building bonds</li> <li>• Teamwork and collaboration</li> </ul>

In life situations and particularly on the job, people tend to exhibit these competencies in groupings, often across the clusters in the competencies framework. This allows the individual competencies to support one another through operating powerfully the synergistic groupings.

Boyatzis, Goleman and Rhee (2000) provided also evidence suggesting that mastery of a "critical mass" of competencies is necessary for superior performance. McClelland (1998) suggests that the critical mass produces its impact on performance above a *tipping point*. The *tipping point* is the point at which strength a competence makes a significant impact on performance. Boyatzis (1999) provided evidence supporting earlier conclusions by McClelland on the critical mass of competencies acting together and surpassing a tipping point in impacting on individual corporate performance.

Other researches (Nygren & Ukertis, 1993; Spencer & Spencer, 1993) reported that competencies tend to operate together through forming a meaningful pattern of abilities that facilitates successful performance in a given role or job.

## **Moving from Individual to Leadership/ Managerial, Group and Organizational Ecs**

The relationship between ECs possessed by the individuals and the resultant organizational core competence and competitive advantage is mediated by a variety of factors, important among them are the various levels through which such competencies are channeled and mediated. Three levels need to be differentiated here: leadership, group and HRM organization system.

**Leadership.** The evidence suggests that emotionally competent leadership is a key to the utilization and application of EC of individuals.

The impact of EC of leaders and managers on unit performance is mediated by the task climate and work environment leaders create. Leadership style seems to drive organizational performance across a wide span of industries and sectors and appears to be a crucial link in the chain from individuals to organization unit to business success. There is a growing body of evidence suggesting that flexibility in using emotional competencies of leaders (in leadership style) and demonstration of a variety of ECs are associated with higher organizational performance. (Lee and Barnard, 1999; Goleman, 2000)

Goleman provided a classification of leadership style and the related EI competencies based on analysis of data on 3,781 executives (Hay/ McBer, 2000; Goleman, 2000). His analysis shed light on the role of EI competencies in leadership effectiveness. The following is a classification of leadership style suggested by Goleman from EC perspectives.

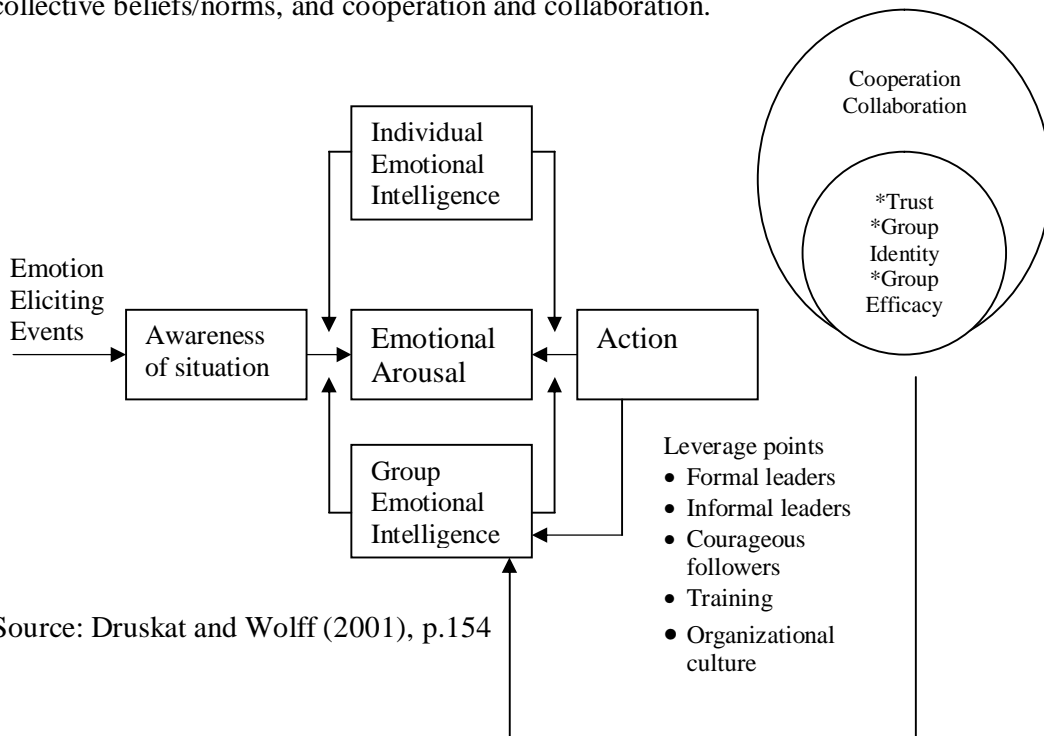
## LEADERSHIP STYLE, EI, AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

<b>Leadership Style</b>	<b>EI Competencies</b>	<b>Impact on climate</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>When appropriate</b>
Visionary	Self-confidence, Empathy, Change Catalyst, Visionary leadership	Most strongly positive	Mobilize others to follow a vision	When change requires a new vision or when a clear direction is needed
Affiliative	Empathy, Building Bonds, Conflict Management	Highly positive	Create harmony	To heal rifts in a team or to motivate during stressful times
Democratic	Teamwork and Collaboration, Communication	Highly positive	Build a commitment through participation	To build buy-in or consensus or to get valuable input from employees
Coaching	Developing Others, Empathy, Emotional Self-Awareness	Highly positive	Build strengths for the future	To help an employee improve performance or develop long-term strengths
Coercive	Achievement Drive, Initiative, Emotional Self-Control	Strongly positive	Immediate compliance	In a crisis, to kick-start a turn around, or with problem employees
Pacesetter	Conscientiousness, Achievement Drive, Initiative	Highly negative	Perform tasks to a high standard	To get quick results from a highly motivated and competent team

Source: Goleman (2001, p.42)

The most effective leaders integrate various styles regularly, switching to the one most appropriate in a given leadership situation (Hay/ McBer, 2000; Williams, 1994). Furthermore Hay/ McBer data suggests that not only that EI- based leadership may be the most important driver of climate but also that climate in turn may account for 20 to 30 percent of organizational performance (Goleman, 2000).

**Group.** Group emotional intelligence can be defined as "the ability of a group to generate a shared set of norms that enables it to manage the emotional processes taking place within the group and in its relation to social context within which it operates. Druskat and Wolf (2001) suggest that the norms of managing the group processes are to cultivate trust, group identity and group efficacy. These norms or collective beliefs facilitate cooperation and collaboration among group members. Group emotional competencies are the norms and abilities that relate to the task and differentiate between effective or superior groups (performance-wise) from average groups. Group emotional competencies operate through two mechanisms: (1) group cultural norms influencing the interpretation of and behavioral response to emotions taking place in the work place, and (2) emotional awareness which provides information about matters in the task environment that may need the group's attention. To be emotionally competent, the group must develop the norms that facilitates and enhance awareness and regulations of three types of emotions (Druskat and Wolff, 2001): the emotions of individual members (particularly Empathy and Social Skills), the group or shared emotions (group atmosphere, Lewin, 1998), and (3) the emotions inherent in relationships with groups and individuals outside the group boundary. The following figure (Druskat and Wolff, 2001) summarizes the components of group emotional competencies and reveals the connection between the emotional process, collective beliefs/norms, and cooperation and collaboration.



Source: Druskat and Wolff (2001), p.154

**Organization.** Emotional competencies at the organizational level consists of two basic components: (1) **organizational systems**, the extent to which emotional dimensions are incorporated in these systems to enhance organizational sensitivity, awareness of its members, and receptivity to emotional events occurring internally and externally, and to regulate its actions towards emotional events, and (2) **organization culture**, the existence of a set of common norms that allow members to be aware of emotional events and be able to regulate their own emotional reactions and the reactions of the systems to these events. Key in the organizational system from emotional intelligence perspective is the vision/management philosophy and the HRM system. These organizational components define the organization's orientation towards the emotions, feelings and attitudes of its key stakeholders: customers, owners, employees, suppliers and community.

The following figure represents a framework of the organization's emotional competencies:

	<b>Internal Stakeholders</b>	<b>External Stakeholders</b>
<b>Recognition</b>	<p><b>Organizational Self-Awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awareness of the emotions and attitudes of members.</li> <li>- Internal image.</li> <li>- Cultural identity.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Organizational Social-Awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customer, and stakeholder orientation.</li> <li>- Social and political sensitivity</li> <li>- External linkage/ networking</li> </ul>
<b>Regulation</b>	<p><b>Organizational Self-Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internal harmony/bonding.</li> <li>- Trust /Accountability.</li> <li>- Integrity</li> <li>- Adaptability.</li> <li>- Results orientation</li> <li>- Initiative</li> </ul>	<p><b>Organizational Relationship-Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Philanthropic orientation</li> <li>- External institutional efficacy.</li> <li>- External communication.</li> <li>- External conflict management.</li> <li>- Environment/ Market leadership.</li> <li>- Catalyzing environmental and external change.</li> <li>- Managing external alliances/ networks and institutional collaboration.</li> </ul>

Emotionally intelligent organizations (EIOs) are those that have the capability to leverage the talent of their members to meet the challenges of and to adapt to the changing and competitive environments. In a stagnant and monopolistic environment, the need for a humanly sensitive organization decreases greatly as the organization is capable of surviving and extracting rent under low external pressure. EIOs exhibit core competencies such as teamwork and collaboration, Adaptability, Achievement/Results orientation, and Customer and Stakeholder's orientation. They tend to be more networked and flexible than traditional hierarchical organizations. In such networked organizations people more often work together in teams and often team members find themselves having to manage non-team members and external relations. Most of the emotional intelligence competencies are crucial for these organizations to perform well. Members must be able to work well with others (Self-Control, Empathy, Teamwork and collaboration, Conflict Management, Communication, Influence others in collaborative manner (Empathy, Influence, Leadership), and find quicker and more expedient ways of doing things (Initiative, Achievement Orientation) (Jacobs.2001). Leaders must create the climate by which individuals and groups can acquire and apply emotional competencies. Groups and teams have to develop the emotional norms that facilitate cooperation and collaboration. The question is how organizations can design their system(s) and develop their culture so that can facilitate the development and application of the above emotional competencies?

### **The Role of the Strategic Vision and Management Philosophy**

The strategic vision of the organization especially when it is internally driven, driven by core competencies, is likely going to reflect the aspired emotional competence the organization needs to achieve. Statements indicating customer sovereignty, sensitivity to and caring for various stakeholders, team orientation, collaborating with and forming strategic alliances, innovation, market leadership, seeking excellence, valuing people and caring for employees...etc are reflections of the emotional dimensions of what the organizations aspires to be. The management philosophy is a complementary part of this human and emotional intelligence orientation. The strategic vision together with management philosophy can be analyzed to extract the degree to which they contain and emphasize emotional intelligence/competence components. Together, they set the overall emotional intelligence direction and orientation of the total organization.

### **The Role of the HRM System**

There are two basic ways to increase emotional intelligence in an organization: (1) hire people (managers, employees) who are emotionally intelligent or (2) develop emotional intelligence in current members. The first pertains to HR selection. The second relates to other HRM functions.

**Selecting for Emotional Intelligence/ Competence.** The quickest way to increase emotional intelligence competencies in members of an organization is to select individuals who already possess and demonstrate these competencies and behaviors (Jacobs, 2001). Although competencies of emotional intelligence are more difficult to detect than traditional factors appearing on the applicant's resume (education, skills and experience), they have been shown to be key differentiators between outstanding and typical performers (Jacobs, 2001; McClelland, 1998; Goleman, 1998). If organizations want to enhance these competencies in their personnel, the HR recruitment, selection and hiring process must include a procedure/ method for identifying these competencies in candidates (Jacobs, 2001, p.160). The literature on emotional competencies existing today provide means and guidelines to develop the formula or algorithm for performance success based on such competencies. These formula or algorithms usually require certain minimum combinations of competencies within or across clusters and minimum tipping points (McClelland, 1998). Boyatzis (1999) spells out four different grouping of relationships that may exist between competencies in a cluster: (1) complementary (synergy associated with simultaneous use of competencies), (2) alternative manifestations (similar competencies but their effectiveness is situation specific), (3) compensatory (make up for deficiency in each other), and (4) antagonistic (the existence of one competence negates or suppresses other competencies). Algorithms of competencies are created empirically through rigorous process that involves correctly sorting **outstanding/ superior** and **typical** performers to an acceptable degree of statistical significance (Jacob, 2001). They are usually developed during the process of competency model building and their validation. Spencer and Spencer (1993) and Jacobs (2001) have used Hay/ McCber database to develop emotional competency models for job groups consisting of professionals, entrepreneurs, individual contributors, salespersons, social workers, therapists, medical personnel, and teachers. Various selection tools are emerging including Emotional Quotient Inventory, Behavioral Event Interview. The use of competency Algorithms and modeling and the statistical validation of their predictive power are promising advances in EC knowledge useful for selection and staffing at all levels in the organization. The work of Spencer (2001) has provided significant contribution to means of analyzing the economic contribution or added value of incorporating ECs in HR programs.

**Training and Development.** When selecting employees with emotional intelligence competencies are costly or practically difficult, developing these competencies in the current work force may be the preferred approach. Under this approach, the organization establishes and implements a comprehensive and long term program of emotional competence development through various activities that aim at getting managers, individuals and groups to acquire emotional competence capabilities and skills. Cherniss and Goleman (2001) with the support of the Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence have developed and issued a number of guidelines for developing training programs on emotional intelligence. The guidelines emphasize creating an encouraging and supportive environment, gauge readiness and especially self directed development, assess accurately development and training needs, and provide performance feedback and arranging support.

**Performance Management** Hartle (1992) has incorporated emotional intelligence into his definition of performance management as "a process or set of processes for establishing shared understanding about what is to be achieved (and how it is to be

achieved), and of managing people in a way that increases the probability that it be achieved." He recommends that performance management systems be applied as an integrated process, incorporating elements such as setting performance objective, coaching and counseling, performance review, skills training, performance-related pay, and training and developments. When performance management integrates these processes over a year long program, it can provide an excellent opportunity to assess emotional intelligence competencies that ultimately lead to outstanding performance, review and provide feedback on them, and support their development (Jacobs,2001).Emotional competencies are likely to be under even greater focus and be incorporated even further when the performance management system is competency-based. When competency models are developed to constitute the basis of the performance management system emotional competencies must be an integral part of these models and in complementing technical/cognitive competencies.

**Compensation and Incentives** Competence-based compensation and incentives systems are increasingly being applied to executives, managers, professional personnel, sales people and other various types of knowledge workers. Emotional competencies being a differentiator between excellent/superior and typical performers must be incorporated into the HR compensation and incentive system. Without explicitly having a pay and incentive structure that is based on performance related competencies, it would be hard for the organization to rely on it HR to accumulate core competencies that contribute to its performance excellence in a competitive environment.

## **The Role of Organizational Culture**

Organization culture refers to the set of common norms, beliefs, values, attitudes and traditions characterizing the behavior of organization members. Organization culture contains a set of powerful factors that impact on behaviors, perceptions motivation and performance of individuals and groups. There is a growing number of organizations engaging in culture transformation programs due to a recognition of the role of cultural factors especially in situations of dynamic change, complex technology, high toned competitive pressure, organizational restructuring, and corporate mergers and acquisition. The corporate analysis of cultural gaps are if done with the organizational emotional competencies in mind are likely going to reveal the areas of strengths and weaknesses in emotional competencies of the organization. These areas would be subject to cultural change and transformation in the direction of the targeted/desired culture.

## **Building the Emotionally Intelligent Organization**

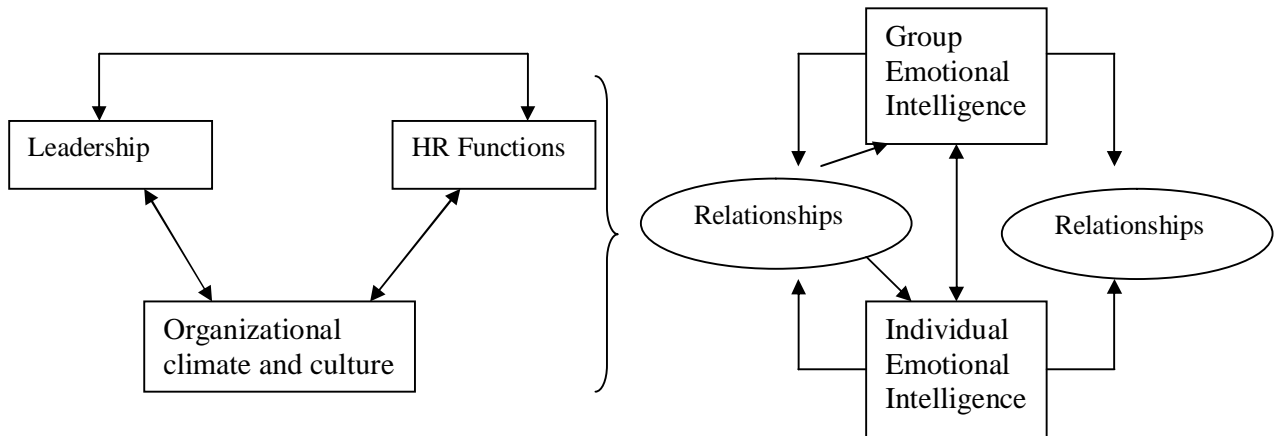
Building the emotionally intelligent organization and the related competencies requires the following:

- \*A strategic vision incorporating emotional intelligence dimensions.
- \*Organization and management systems inclusive of emotional competence dimensions: self awareness, self management, social awareness, and relationship management.
- \*Human resources system and functions which incorporates and emphasizes emotional competences in its key policies and subsystems: recruitment and selection, performance management, training and development, and compensation and incentives.
- \*Leadership: Executives, managers and leaders possessing and exhibiting emotional competencies and acting as role models with regard to them for the rest of the organization.
- \*Organization culture supportive of performance excellence based on emotional intelligence and the related competencies.

The initial keys in the process of building the emotionally intelligent organization contain the following domains:

- Strategic vision
- Leadership
- HRM system
- Organization culture

Building and developing emotional competencies in other organization and management systems could be a subsequent phase. Injecting emotional intelligence in the organizational culture can not be realized unless there is a critical core of emotional competencies established in key areas: strategic vision, leadership and HRM. However the impact on organizational performance of the emotional competencies can be realized only when there is enough of these competencies built in the organizational climate and culture. The following figure contains a model suggested by Cherniss (2001) on the relationships between emotional intelligence and organizational effectiveness.



Source: Cherniss (2001, p.8)

The model emphasizes HRM, leadership system and organizational culture but ignores the context in which these elements operate: Organization strategy/vision and other organization and management systems (e.g., organization structure, communication, control...etc). However, the model suggests that system wide factors operate through their effect on and penetration into naturally occurring relationships and within natural setting in which individuals and groups behave in the organization.

Cherniss's model suggests that building EI in organizations requires the integration of various factors and the harmonization of multiple interventions. Cherniss (2001) admits that there could be other important factor which impact on individual and group EI.

Taking Cherniss' notions and integrating them with our preceding analysis, it is possible to construct a nesting three dimensional matrix to represent the various factors of EI and ECs in the organization which impact on its performance excellence and effectiveness by integrating the following:

1- Emotional intelligence / competence dimensions:

- Self-Awareness
- Self Management
- Social-Awareness

- Relationship Management

2- Emotional intelligence / competence domains:

- Strategy and vision
- HRM system
- Leadership
- Organization culture
- Organization structure and management systems

3- Focal units:

- Individuals
- Groups
- Total organization

The above classification ( 4 dimensions x 5 domains x 3 focal units ) produces 60 emotional competencies. The challenge is how to measure these competencies and integrate them together to maximize synergy and impact on organizational excellence and effectiveness.

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