

Emotional intelligence in the military

Autores: Arboleda Guirao, Inmaculada de Jesús (Doctora en Filología Inglesa, Máster en Lengua y Lingüística Inglesas, Licenciada en Filología Inglesa, Profesor Contratado Doctor. Departamento de Filología Inglesa. Universidad de Murcia); Gonzalez Marin, Adela (Doctora en Psicología, Profesor del centro universitario de la defensa); Peña Pan, Luis (Graduado en Ingeniería de Organización Industrial).

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence has turned out to be a progressively mainstream as a measure for distinguishing individuals who are successful in life, and as an instrument for reaching this success. As members of the military and other forces with the same purpose, it would be useful to analyze emotional intelligence in this environment and develop their mission in a better way. It is quite obvious that the military environment is different from most workplaces.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, workplace, military

Título: La inteligencia emocional en los militares.

Resumen

La inteligencia emocional se ha convertido progresivamente en corriente principal como medida para distinguir individuos que son exitosos en la vida, y como instrumento para alcanzar ese éxito. Como miembros del mundo militar y otras fuerzas con el mismo propósito, sería útil analizar la inteligencia emocional en este ambiente y desarrollar su misión de mejor manera. Es bastante obvio que el contexto militar es diferente de la mayoría de los lugares de trabajo.

Palabras clave: Inteligencia emocional, lugar de trabajo, militares.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As members of the military and other forces with the same purpose, it would be useful to analyze what impact the discovery on emotional quotient might have within the group and how it can help develop their mission in a better way. It is quite obvious that the military environment is different from most workplaces. According to article 8 of the Spanish Constitution: "The mission of the Armed Forces, comprising the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, is to guarantee the sovereignty and independence of Spain and to defend its territorial integrity and the constitutional order." Under this order, the Armed Forces have to deal everyday with difficult tasks, where there is a high level of risk and the slightest misdoing might have catastrophic results, leading to loses of lives. The environment where the Armed Forces play their role is very unstable and therefore each member should adequately be prepared to react in an effective way.

Nowadays, even the youngest and lowest-ranking soldiers should effectively interact and handle local people from groups that do not share their religious convictions, social viewpoints or traditions. These social contrasts bring a layer of vulnerability into war operational contexts where there are instances of extraordinary anxiety that regularly add to compelling emotional reactions, for example, uneasiness or outrage. These emotional reactions can lead warfighters to settle on judgments and choices they would not generally make. In high-stakes circumstances, even the smallest error may have appalling results; consequently, a need exists to equip Warfighters with aptitudes that enable them to perceive and control their feelings (Oden, Lohani, McCoy, Crutchfield & Rivers, 2015).

More important is the fact that the leader of these soldiers must be even more prepared. It is widely known that leadership is a basic and important ability in any association or enterprise. Nevertheless, in the armed service, effective leadership is the difference between the survival of a group or death. Military leaders are in charge of the preparation, training and morale of their subordinates, the status of which may decide if those subordinates return home securely and alive after a mission. Military leadership once in a while happens in an office setting and can require conventional authority aptitudes, yet military leaders should likewise be poised to lead in threatening conditions. A military leader, in this manner, must have the capacity to cater his identity characteristics and leadership style to the circumstances and the outside variables of the circumstances that may or not be inside his control (Hudson, 2016).

Military leaders are warriors, moderators and ambassadors who arrange, enhance, facilitate and execute obligations inside the country and abroad. The Army seeks prepared, nimble, versatile and multi-talented leaders to take decisions in a period of quick change. The Army needs leaders who can cope with present and future difficulties while applying lessons learned over the past. To be effective, Army leaders should persistently assemble and refine their leader qualities, look to improve proficient information, and apply very important leader skills as they move from administration positions to the hierarchical and key levels (Taylor-Clark, 2015). The leader is the person who every follower in the organization will try to imitate and follow. He should be the one with the best personality and knowledge out of the group. While there are no impeccable men, there are the individuals who turn out to be moderately ideal leaders of men since something brings out the best of every man who follows them. That is the method for human instinct. Minor deficiencies do not debilitate the working steadfastness, or development, of the devotee who has discovered somebody whose quality and personality he regards worthy of copying. Thus, every single leader around the world should be an example to follow and an inspiration (U.S. Department of Defense, 2008).

Dwight D. Eisenhower stated that: "The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office". On the battlefield, integrity is more fragile than probably anywhere else. A combat leader must have the ability to understand and control his own emotions, the emotions of others and the emotions of groups in order to maintain his integrity, exactly what we understand today by emotional intelligence. It is not only a question of working only on developing splendid strategic actions to achieve success in a war but also on the personality and traits of a leader.

While encumbered by huge asset constraints, military leaders need to decide on fast choices in conditions described by instability and erosion. The Army needs its leaders to build firm groups, to develop trust, and to cultivate positive atmospheres. Armed force leaders must create and impart a common vision and set clear mission objectives for the company or unit to be fruitful responders of the calling and defenders of the country. They have a massive duty to guarantee the present and future achievement of the military (Taylor-Clark, 2015). These necessities are less about the concrete abilities of cognitive intelligence, specialized information and strategic capability and more about the delicate aptitudes of emotional knowledge. The emotionally well-balanced individual will be capable of anticipating misfortune and its effects and additionally suspecting the potential reaction of others to difficulty. This will enable him to create suitable reactions to difficulty and solve situations rapidly. Emotional intelligence enables people to manage the anxiety by understanding their feelings and also the feelings of others (Sewell, 2011).

The ideas of emotional intelligence, in any case, have not been explicitly referenced in the scholarship of military leadership. Surely, a few qualities of good leaders could be named as those controlled by a man with high emotional knowledge, however, that term has not been utilized. Faith in one's capacities, faking that conviction and encouraging confidence in one's subordinates are vital in the military profession, yet military leaders are not given the instruments to develop their emotional intelligence (Hudson, 2016).

In what ways can the Armed Forces transform great leaders into extraordinary leaders? This examination contends that an immediate connection of emotional intelligence with this transformation exists. Specialized abilities and IQ form the basic level aptitudes for administration positions (Goleman, 1998). Fantastic preparation, a sharp, logical personality and incredible thoughts are just one piece of what makes an extraordinary leader. Extraordinary leaders have a high level of emotional intelligence.

Another big issue related to emotional intelligence in the military is the psychological damage or trauma going through battle experiences causes to soldiers and their inability to cope with the emotions which appear after, changing their lives forever.

In such a difficult situation, an extensive number of veterans encounter important negative feelings following their war experiences. Sentiments of blame, disgrace, dismissal, seclusion, estrangement, vulnerability and dread are normal. In many examples, these negative emotions result in flashbacks and serious normalization issues. Veterans battle to adjust to regular citizen life and family circumstances. Numerous soldiers who have served become estranged from loved ones because of the poignancy and gravity of their encounters. They experience issues reacting and managing circumstances in a social environment. Emotional intelligence offers a solid way to temper the negative effects associated with being a member of the military. It grows intrapersonal and relational types of abilities permitting higher versatility. Proactive consideration and ability building is a more positive, more productive, approach to help the mental prosperity of members of the military (Jerus, 2015).

2. QUALITIES

2.1. Self-awareness

“Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate” -C.G. Jung

“When awareness is brought to an emotion, power is brought to your life” – Tara Meyer Robson

Earlier in this work, we described self-awareness as the capacity to perceive and comprehend individual dispositions, feelings and their impact on others. It incorporates fearlessness, reasonable self-evaluation, and sense of humor. Self-awareness relies upon one's capacity to screen one's own feeling state and to accurately recognize and name one's feelings.

Within the military, it is rather self-evident that much of the success of a leader will depend on whether he knows himself or not. In Sun Tzu's own words, “know thy self, know thy enemy. A thousand battles, a thousand victories”. A leader must be able to know his weaknesses and his strengths, his beliefs, his motivations, his values, his mood, his personality, how he reacts to different adversities, when he is overreacting and how to avoid it, be conscious of his emotions, how his emotions might affect others, and have the ability to manage them. From Epictetus' “No man is free who is not master of himself”, it would seem pretty obvious that not only a man but a leader must master himself before trying to influence others. Here lies the importance of self-awareness. An Army military leader who can take part in activities in light of their strengths and abilities unequivocally earns their devotees' trust. Great character requires that a leader has a reasonable sense of their personality. An absence of mindfulness prompts negative impact. Followers regularly see leaders who are not mindful as self-important or separated from the group (Hudson, 2016).

As highlighted by Kouzes and Posner (2011, p. 22), “the quest for leadership, therefore, is first an inner quest to discover who you are and what you care about, and it's through this process of self-examination that you find the awareness needed to lead”, a military leader must analyze his life so that he can distinguish the progressions he has to make to build up his authority. Leadership starts with driving yourself. The path toward becoming a leader is paved with self-awareness. This is the reason why knowing yourself is the establishment of effective authority. You cannot start to lead without a decent comprehension of your identity. Turning into a leader begins with knowing yourself and what you need to make of your life. Self-awareness is the establishment of solid character, reason and validness. It is just when you comprehend your identity, not what the world supposes you are, and you are prepared to lead. Having a profound comprehension of your identity and where you are going gives the setting to where and how you lead (Ambler, 2016). In the military context, where critical decisions must be made in a matter of seconds, impeccable leaders are needed and, as a result, the foundation for this is knowing yourself.

Battle zones generally rule out the gentler side of leadership, which may be the reason why the military does not generally prepare leaders attune to feelings. This can have two different interpretations. On the one hand, this is positive since in warzone there might be a mission that must be accomplished where humans lives are not the priority number one and doubts generated by emotions where there is the risk of casualties might affect the decisions and actions taken, forgetting the objective of the mission. Do I save my friend putting at risk the success of the mission or should I forget about him and continue? While the right choice would be to continue with the mission, emotions might appear, which may distract the leader from his actions and make him take the wrong decision. Not being sensitive to these issues will help the leader have a cold mind and establish and follow priorities as they are. On the other hand, not being touchy can bring about an absence of mindfulness in leaders to their own particular feelings and to those of their subordinates, which can result in a low emotional intelligence and have negative effects on other areas such as building relationships with subordinates (Hudson, 2016).

2.2. Self-management

“You can conquer almost any fear if you will only make up your mind to do so. For remember, fear doesn't exist anywhere except in the mind” -Dale Carnegie

Self-management, or in other words, the capacity to control or divert problematic driving forces and temperaments, and the ability to suspend judgment and to think before acting plays a very important role in a military context too.

Once a human being is able to know himself and his emotions, the next step is to have the ability to control them. Goleman (1998, p. 60) emphasizes that “emotions that simmer beneath the threshold of awareness can have a powerful impact on how we perceive and react”. Emotionally intelligent people who can manage themselves will probably see expressions of outrage as inadequate and react contrarily to such articulations since they may undermine social concordance (Graziano, Jensen-Campbell & Hair, 1996). In a stressful environment such as a war, working under high pressure, a member of the military must be able to cope with all kinds of emotions and moods that arise, pushing them to the side and focusing on the accomplishment of the mission.

A leader’s duty is to maintain order inside a team and form a common and positive culture by inspiring team members. Leaders cannot always control the biological motivations that drive their feelings, yet they can build up the capacity to deal with those driving forces. Self-administration keeps the person from giving internal sentiments and feelings a chance to control practices and activities. Self-management constitutes directing unfavorable feelings in helpful or positive ways. A mindful leader can alter their considerations, sentiments and activities through self-management (Hudson, 2016). Leaders cannot be “passion slaves” (Goleman, 1998, p. 76). Emotions should be taken into consideration since they might be useful at some points but the leader must be able to analyze the situation as if those emotions do not exist so that his mind is objective and capable of making better decisions.

What would happen to a military leader if he allowed his emotions of anger and fear control him and the decisions he makes? “A wise man controls his temper. He knows that anger causes mistakes” (Proverbs 14:29). First of all, the decision will not be adequate or at least they could be certainly better, but it would be even more important that their subordinates will feel that their leader is not in control of the situation as he cannot even manage outside pressures let alone the ones within himself. It is consistent with conventional wisdom that human beings will never achieve an aim efficiently when they are irate or perturbed by their emotions. Their judgment is warped; their brain is cluttered. It would not be possible to talk admirably nor act prudently when we are anxious. Whatever they say and do cannot be effectively fixed back and a lot of damage can be caused.

Self-management has the most astounding third-order impact: “It is better to be slow-tempered than famous; it is better to have self-control than to control an entire army” (Proverbs 16:32). A leader known for the capacity to resist the urge to panic in all circumstances encourages colleagues to carry on in a comparable way. Similar situations result when a leader who is known for being verbally harsh. Making a positive contribution includes using enthusiasm for good. Leaders who can positively utilize their energy, impact and allure to show the perfect measure of affectability and enthusiasm would be able to adequately take advantage of their subordinates’ feelings. Leaders who avoid panicking under anxiety can think logically and decidedly impact situational results. Military leaders who self-manage significantly influence their ability to control different skills, particularly those related to social mindfulness and social aptitudes (Hudson, 2016).

Discipline and self-management are closely interrelated. The English Oxford Living Dictionaries (2018, para. 1) define self-management as: “Management of or by oneself; the taking of responsibility for one’s own behavior and well-being” while the Cambridge Dictionary (2018, para. 1) defines discipline as “training that makes people more willing to obey or more able to control themselves”.

One of the most important values within IG0-04 Liderazgo y valores del Ejército del Aire is discipline (Mestre Barea & Moliner González, 2017). Self-discipline can be easily linked to self-management since without self-management, discipline would not exist. When an individual recruits for the military, his initial concept of discipline is outer. His military authorities in charge of the individual progress and education expect that he has no self-control and therefore aim to introduce it within the individual. It is one of the first and most important values that need to be learned. In the civilian world, be that as it may, his way of development can be slower because it is not needed at early ages. The military man has gone into a demanding/exacting/unrelenting profession. His nation relies upon him for its very survival. He will be made a request to risk or give his life for his kindred troopers and for the country. He needs to grow up quick and be prepared to do things he would never do otherwise (Anthony, 2011).

Self-management also helps soldiers to fully comprehend and acknowledge war experiences. More noteworthy levels of self-assurance and interpersonal abilities help adapting to stressors and abnormal amounts of emotional challenges. Self-administration improves control, discipline and the capacity to adjust. These additionally grow positive feelings, idealism and a general strength (Jerus, 2015).

2.3. Motivation

“Believe in yourself! Have faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you cannot be successful or happy” -Norman Vincent Peale

The motivation for serving, not contract, must be at the core of every military individual. On joining the Army all members acknowledge a responsibility of serving and promise to comply with their obligation regardless of challenges and perils. This is communicated in the wording of the Oath of Allegiance in which all troopers promise to subordinate their own advantages to those of the Nation. This may include leaders giving their lives, however, more routinely, putting the well-being, security and requirements of others before their own. This sort of benevolence will procure regard and urge others to act comparably.

Amid World War II, the cohesion of troops and trust in their officers, not the danger of discipline, were unequivocal components when inspiring troops to progress in battle. Leaders influenced and motivated their soldiers giving them the freedom to think and follow up on their own, therefore, expanding the significance of self-management and a feeling of shared obligation (Rodrigues-Goulart, 2006).

Some motivational components are more imperative than others, thus it is exceptionally valuable to recognize them. Because of this objective, an exploration venture by Oetting was directed, utilizing Brazilian World War II veterans. The exploration showed the significance of having a feeling of obligation, having faith in the authenticity of the reason, being confident about the success of the power and its authority, and building unit attachment. Most importantly, the key factors were feeling of obligation, proficient authority and cohesion (Oetting, 1988).

Feeling of obligation constitutes a critical moral and mental help for some soldiers in war zones. In war, striking execution implies finishing battle tasks disregarding adversity and excuses. To overcome difficulty, one must have the motivation and trust themselves (Rodrigues-Goulart, 2006).

2.4. Empathy

“No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care”

-Theodore Roosevelt

Empathy was defined earlier as the capacity to comprehend the emotional makeup of other individuals, that is, an ability in treating individuals and predicting their emotional responses. So as to really comprehend another person's point of view, the leader should watch over the subordinate –and not simply from a mission achievement viewpoint. The leader must look at the subordinate as a man, as a human being with feelings. Empathy is a critical component of leadership since it enables a leader to comprehend the emotional status of their subordinates, that is, an individual's expectations, dreams, concerns and fears that drive inspiration and continuance. Military leaders must be able to acknowledge hardships that their followers go through amid operations evaluating the realistic nature of their plans and choices (Hudson, 2016). Furthermore, it shows that pioneers' emotions may have a much greater effect on their subordinates than the information included in the message itself (Newcombe & Ashkanasy, 2002).

Individuals look for durable connections with other individuals and empathy is the foundation of any healthy relationship. The leader who knows how to use the power of empathy wisely will find better correspondence, more cohesion, greater discipline and a better morale in his group. Empathetic leaders help create an atmosphere where every worker feels heard and taken care of. While empathy might generate some controversy due to its significance, without it, a leader would be missing a great interpersonal skill which, when well applied, will achieve good human relationships and turn the team into a more successful and united one (Garner, 2009). Leaders must be sure they are using the right emotional expressions as they can be a “powerful source of information - in effect, a window into another person's inner thoughts and feelings” as well as “powerful source of influence in organizations” (Elfenbein, 2007, p. 356).

Empathy is also important not only between members of a team but also in the outer world. Today missions require considerably more contact and comprehension of the local people in war theaters. Members of the military when deployed must build relationships with the people where they are operating, no matter if they are enemies or allies, since they will often need their help to accomplish missions. When making decisions which might affect a local population, leaders must also look at the effects and the feelings they will create and whether their programs will be accepted or not, as well as the possible reactions by the enemy. Empathy therefore has a truly critical relevance when dealing with

overseas operations (Richards & McCombie, 2013). A revolutionary research finding on the interpersonal impacts of emotion is the possibility that emotions do not only impact the individuals who experience and express them but also the individuals who see those (Elfenbein, 2007). In missions, for example, counterinsurgency, peace enforcement, reconstruction and stabilization, it is essential to create trust with local people whose help is critical to progress. It requires meeting with individuals before knowing whether they are companions or adversaries (Richards & McCombie, 2013).

Not at all like in non-military personnel associations, in the military more prominent significance is frequently given to the reference values and, specifically, to steadfastness, regard, honesty, mettle, respect and sacrifice. Decision-making in the civilian world has a tendency to be finished by utilizing various wellsprings of data, including those given by subordinates, while that happens less in military world as it is expected this could indicate a danger to the leader or the institution (Ulmer, 1998). Therefore, it is of vital importance that a leader has the empathy required so that his subordinates are willing to follow him and not judge his orders or decisions.

2.5. Social skills

“No one can live without relationship. You may withdraw into the mountains, become a monk, a sannyasi, wander off into the desert by yourself, but you are related. You cannot escape from that absolute fact. You cannot exist in isolation” - Jiddu Krishnamurti

As explained by Hudson (2016, p. 46), “social skills are a manifestation of self-awareness, self-management and social awareness competencies combined”. A leader is not straightforwardly in charge of accomplishing the mission. A leader is in charge of the subordinates who are in charge of achieving the mission. In this way, “managing relationships is a critical leadership competency” (p. 46). Leaders who comprehend and control their own feelings and can understand the sentiments of others are extremely good at managing subordinates. Social skills permit a leader to move an association toward the path wanted. These leaders are in high demand in the military since they adequately spread their energy all through the unit/organization.

If social skills were not involved within a group, the group would never be more than a disparate collection of strangers and will not ever be able to work as a team, one of foundations for the success of any enterprise but even more important in the military world.

In fact, Martin (2006, p. 57) holds the view that

teamwork requires some sacrifice up front; people who work as a team have to put the collective needs of the group ahead of their individual interests. The concept of a team and of teamwork is at the very core of the Army. Without a team, the Army would not exist. And without teamwork, the Army could not function.

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