EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE VALUE MANAGEMENT FACILITATOR

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The importance of the facilitator in the Value Management (VM) process has not been accorded sufficient emphasis in the literature to date, particularly in the construction management field. This paper aims to develop a deeper understanding of the conceptual construct of emotional intelligence (EI), Value Management facilitation, and group effectiveness, and to discover how these factors may influence the achievement of successful VM outcomes in the construction industry context. An exploratory review of the literature is undertaken, which suggests that the VM facilitator needs to possess attributes that include leadership qualities and competence in a variety of management skills related to human dynamics, particularly in emotional intelligence (EI). Furthermore, raising the "emotional awareness" of VM facilitators may provide the opportunity to enhance the effectiveness of the VM process, particularly in the New Zealand construction industry, where the "soft" VM approach (incorporating facets of soft systems methodology) is increasingly being adopted at the pre-design project stage. The emotional intelligence of the VM facilitator can significantly influence the socio-emotional issues encountered in the VM workshop, thereby effectively managing the group process, in order to enhance the value achieved on construction projects.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Group facilitation, Soft systems methodology, Value management.

INTRODUCTION

Schwarz (1994) purported that, to be effective, groups must meet all of the following criteria:
The group's objectives are achieved, or surpassed
The processes and structures used to carry out the work maintain or enhance the capability of members to work together on subsequent group tasks
The group experience, on balance, satisfies rather than frustrates the personal needs of group members
        (Schwarz 1994)
This is especially so for Value Management workshop groups operating within the context of the construction industries of Australia and New Zealand, where Barton's (1996) 'soft' approach towards VM is commonly used in practice. The prototypic nature of construction, with its ill-defined, complex, multi-perspective issues which are often found at the early project development phases, and its multi-faceted clients, have been acknowledged by Barton, and are reflected in this approach. The focus is on an integrated approach to communication, where skilled facilitation is needed (Barton 2000).

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'Soft' VM [based on the principles of Checkland and Scholes' (1990) "soft systems methodology"] recognises that individuals' perceptions of values are influenced by a range of factors, and may result in each person's perception being idiosyncratic (Leung and Liu 1998). Furthermore, 'soft' VM acknowledges that the client is not a single person, and that the very process of modelling their value system will inevitably influence the values and perceptions of the workshop participants (Green 1999). Consequently, the success of 'soft' VM depends on the attitudes of the parties involved (Australian/New Zealand Standard *AS/NZS 4183: Value Management* 1994). Of crucial importance is the ability of the VM facilitator to secure the necessary commitment and enthusiasm from the client and the entire team (Palmer 1990). This paper describes the conceptual construct of emotional intelligence (EI), and proposes that EI can be used to encapsulate at least some of what constitutes the personal style of the VM facilitator, and that EI is influential in addressing the socio-emotional issues surrounding group dynamics, and hence, may have a direct influence on the success of the VM workshop.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

What is Emotional Intelligence?

The current widespread interest in the topic of emotional intelligence (EI) has undoubtedly been fuelled by Daniel Goleman's book " Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ" (Goleman 1996). Although Goleman is seen as the progenitor of the concept of EI, the construct was first labelled as such by Salovey and Mayer (1990), and its roots can be traced back to earlier research into "social intelligences" (Thorndike 1920).

Emotional intelligence is a nebulous construct, and there is a wide range of associated terminology, which can be somewhat confusing, as a plethora of terms are used to describe it, including: "emotional intelligence" (Goleman 1996; Salovey and Mayer 1990); "emotional literacy" (Steiner 1997); "emotional quotient" (Goleman 1997; Bar-On 1988); "personal intelligences" (Gardner 1983); "social intelligence" (Thorndike 1920); "interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence" (Gardner and Hatch 1989); "successful intelligence" (Sternberg 1996), and "emotional competence" (Goleman 1998).

Salovey and Mayer (1990) describe emotional intelligence as the "ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (p.189). Goleman (1997) provides a useful definition of the construct of emotional intelligence, which is about:

- Knowing what you are feeling and being able to handle those feelings without having them swamp you;

- Being able to motivate yourself to get jobs done, be creative and perform at your peak; and

- Sensing what others are feeling, and handling relationships effectively.

Emotional intelligence is thought to be born largely in the neurotransmitters of the brain's limbic system, which governs feelings, impulses, and drives, which learns best through motivation, extended practice, and feedback, as opposed to the kind of learning which occurs in the neocortex, which governs analytical and technical ability (Goleman 2004).

Background to the development of Emotional Intelligence
The history of research on intelligence has made it clear that a person's success in career and personal life depends not only on IQ (intelligence quotient), but also on other factors. It has been acknowledged that the concept of intelligence encompasses social and/or emotional factors as well as cognitive factors (Sternberg 1985; Thorndike 1920; Wechsler 1943).

Thorndike (1920), in reviewing the predictive power of IQ, developed a model of intelligence which included not only the traditional intellectual factors (i.e. general intelligence, sometimes referred to as "g"), but also what he called social intelligence, "the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls - to act wisely in human relations" (1920: 228). Thorndike's definition of social intelligence has a cognitive and behavioural component, and implies: 1. the ability to understand and manage people is an intellectual capacity, and 2. this capacity is different from the abstract-verbal and concrete-mechanical aspects of intelligence. Social intelligence was seen as a means of explaining variations in outcome measures not accounted for by IQ.

Much research was undertaken over the next fifty years on social intelligence, with numerous studies conducted attempting to separate academic from social intelligence, highlighting the dominance of the behaviourist paradigm on the one hand, and the IQ testing movement on the other. These studies met with only moderate success, partly due to the need to distinguish between the cognitive and behavioural aspects of social intelligence, and analysis turned to other ways of conceptualising and measuring non-academic intellectual factors.

Wechsler's (1952) development of a widely used IQ test resulted in the concept of "non-intellective factors of general intelligence", but little work was done in the field until Gardner (1983) developed his Multiple Intelligence Theory, which combines cognitive with emotional aspects of intelligence, and includes two varieties of personal intelligence: the "interpersonal intelligence" (the ability to determine other people's reactions, needs, emotions and intentions), and "intrapersonal intelligence" (the knowledge of one's own internal processes and feelings).

Bar-On (1988) used the term "emotional quotient" (EQ), in his attempt to assess EI in terms of a measure of well-being, and now defines EI in terms of an array of emotional and social knowledge and abilities that influence our ability to effectively cope with environmental demands, including the ability to:

- be aware of, to understand, and to express oneself
- be aware of, to understand, and to relate to others
- deal with strong emotions and control one's impulses
- adapt to change and to solve problems of a personal or a social nature.

The five domains in his model are: intrapersonal skills; interpersonal skills; adaptability; stress management, and general mood (Bar-On 1997).

Salovey and Mayer (1990) developed an influential model of EI, which evolved into an EI model with a cognitive emphasis, in order to distinguish EI abilities from social traits or talents. It focussed on specific mental aptitudes for recognising and marshalling emotions, and attempts to include some measure of "thinking about feeling", an aptitude lacked by models that focus on simply perceiving and regulating feelings. They distinguished six components of emotional intelligence:

- emotional self-awareness

- assertiveness

- empathy

- interpersonal relationships

- stress tolerance

- impulse control   (Salovey and Mayer 1990)

Mayer and Salovey revised their model in 1997, which comprises four tiers of abilities, ranging from the most basic psychological processes, to those that are more advanced; from:

- the perception, appraisal and expression of emotion [most basic], to

- the emotional facilitation and prioritisation of thinking, and then on to

- the understanding and analysis of emotions, and lastly

- the general ability to marshal the emotions in support of some social goal [most complex]

(Mayer and Salovey 1997)

Building on the work of Salovey and Mayer (1990), Goleman (1996) followed the paradigm of "meta-cognition" (i.e. awareness of one's mental processes), rather than an exploration of the full range of emotional abilities, and suggested that there are five critical pillars, or competencies, of emotional intelligence: (1) Self-Awareness; (2) Self-Regulation: (3) Self-Motivation; (4) Social Awareness (Empathy); and (5) Social Skills (Goleman 1996; 2004). In 1998, Goleman recognised a need to go beyond meta-cognition, to the concept of "meta-mood" (the awareness of one's own emotions), and set out a framework of emotional competencies, an emotional competence defined as "a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work" (Goleman 1998:174). There are twenty competencies, distributed among four domains, or clusters, of emotional intelligence, being:

Self-Awareness Cluster

- Emotional self-awareness

- Accurate self-assessment

- Self-confidence

Self-Management Cluster

- Emotional self-control

- Trustworthiness

- Conscientiousness

- Adaptability

- Achievement drive

- Initiative

Social Awareness Cluster

- Empathy

- Service Orientation

- Organizational awareness

Relationship Management Cluster

- Developing others

- Influence

- Communication

- Conflict management

- Visionary leadership

- Catalyzing change

- Building bonds

- Teamwork and collaboration   (Goleman 2001)

Effective leaders usually have strengths in at least one competence from each of the four clusters. Emotional competencies are learned abilities, and emotional intelligence is seen as being the underlying potential within an individual to become skilled at these competencies (Goleman 2001).

Value Management Facilitation and Group Effectiveness
There is no theoretical framework, or methodology, capable of supporting a study of the effect of emotional intelligence on VM facilitator effectiveness. Even though mainstream management science, and in particular, group dynamics, provides a set of general guidelines for the development of a framework, its findings are too broad and general for what is needed here, and thus are in need of adaptation and refinement. There are both conceptual and methodological gaps in the VM literature; however, some ideas are offered by authors in the VM discipline (see below). None of these, however, is aimed directly at investigating the relationship between the emotional intelligence of experienced VM facilitators, and the effectiveness of the VM workshop, or study. The closest related works are concerned primarily with "task" - the Job Plan, function analysis, and VM tools and techniques. However, the literature, as it is, concerning VM facilitation is briefly reviewed here.
Kirk (1992) undertook hypothesis-generating research into the use of gaming/simulation in VE workshops by observation in a laboratory setting, and self-report instruments administered to group participants post-task.
Group behaviour was monitored using Bales' (1950) Interaction Process Analysis scale, based on video recorded multiple group tasks. He considered that the factors of leadership, cohesiveness and communication were most influential in the success/failure of a workshop.
Yeomans (1995) developed a Function Model as a concise guide to the requirements of VM facilitation, based on Heron's (1989) Facilitation Model, which highlighted six broad areas of facilitation competency:

- Understand Task and Process

- Earn Respect

- Maintain Focus

- Engender Creativity

- Create/Maintain Positive Environment

- Employ Flexibility

Yeomans considered that the personal style of the VM facilitator was influential in effective management of group process, ensuring group performance, and thereby success, of a VM workshop (Yeomans 1995). In 1997, Yeomans talked of "facets of style": intellect, honesty, ethics, temperament, genuine interest and a principled value system, which become overlaid on group process. Emotional competence was seen as an advanced and mature state of personal development, being many-dimensional, and an exemplar of "distress-free authority". It was also considered that the facilitator should be in full emotional control, attuned to the participants and group as a whole, and should grasp the significance of the cues generated by the group (Yeomans 1997). Simister and Green (1997) identified six recurring themes in VM practice in the UK, which provide a grounded basis for further research into what constitutes effective value management, and consider that of particular importance is the need to secure the active participation of the key project stakeholders.

Male et al (1998) conducted research to compare and contrast methodologies, tools and techniques of VM used internationally in construction and manufacturing against a benchmark methodology developed by Kelly and Male (1993). They carried out a review of the literature, guidance notes, standards, and fieldwork internationally, which widely iterated that experienced VM facilitators were paramount for a successful VM workshop, and that the VM facilitator should possess attributes that include leadership qualities and competence in a variety of management skills related to human dynamics and the management of teams.

Woodhead (1998) explored the different contexts that exist for VM facilitation, and how facilitation is defined within each context, and made the distinction between facilitator "styles" and "abilities"; he considered it crucial that the facilitator sets up and maintains a trust culture within, and evaluates the emotional needs of, participants during, the study.

Shen and Chung's (2002) research into difficulties encountered in VM studies revealed that VM practitioners consider that team approach and team spirit are critical for a successful VM study, and that members' participation (or lack of it) is a problem that frequently occurs.

DISCUSSION

Most of the previous research in the field has not had a major focus on the group process aspect of VM facilitation, and has tended to have been undertaken in a laboratory or structured observation setting, using simulated tasks, with participants often drawn from undergraduate classes. Whilst the literature provides a useful background, it is purported that empirical research has yet to be done based upon actual VM workshops and VM facilitators, with specific regard to emotional intelligence and the socio-emotional issues surrounding group dynamics, and their influence on the successful outcome of the VM workshop. The relationships between theory and practice in this area have not been previously explored.

Gillian Kelly's (1996) research into group facilitation established a strong link between socio-emotional issues (comprising group maintenance, group dynamics, and people issues) within the group, and the level of group participation, but concluded that facilitators tend not to address these issues unless, or until, they jeopardise the functioning of the group.

However, Barton's (1996) 'soft' VM approach employed in the strategic planning phase of projects attempts to "explicitly recognize the innate wickedness, viciousness, fuzziness and general complexity of problems involving people", and the aim of such

soft systems approaches is "to create a common understanding of the problem and the preferred solution" (Smith, Kenley and Wyatt 1998: 390;391). It is through the adoption of this "soft" approach that "group process" is considered to be as important, indeed if not more so, than the rigid adherence to Miles' (1972) "VM Job Plan", and as such, is very much a system in which the facilitator attempts to create a supportive environment in which the stakeholders can work together to seek consensus on value-improved outcomes such as strategies and concepts (Barton and Wilson 1997).

It is proposed that the emotionally intelligent VM facilitator is adept at handling Kelly's (1996) socio-emotional issues within the group, in managing group process, building "social harmony", the collective "group intelligence" (Williams and Sternberg, 1988), and thus enhancing the performance of the group. Some researchers have concluded that to be most effective, a team needs to "create emotionally intelligent norms – the attitudes and behaviours that eventually become habits – that support behaviours for building trust, group identity, and group efficacy" (Druskat and Wolff 2001:82).

There have been several empirical studies (Lam 1998; Mount 2000; Murensky 2000) incorporating EI testing instruments, which conclude that there is a definite link between EQ and behavioural competencies in the management field.

The literature reviewed suggests that the conceptual construct of "emotional intelligence" can be used to encapsulate at least some of what constitutes the personal style of the VM facilitator, and that EI is influential in addressing the socio-emotional issues surrounding group dynamics, and in managing group process, and hence, may have a direct influence on the success of the VM workshop.

Druskat and Wolff, who developed a model of group emotional intelligence, assert that "just like individuals, the most effective teams are emotionally intelligent ones – and that any team can attain emotional intelligence" (Druskat and Wolff 2004:90). IQ and technical skills (expertise in VM theory and practice, for instance) do matter, but mainly as "threshold" capabilities, the entry-level prerequisites of a VM facilitator, but emotional intelligence is said to be the "sine qua non of leadership" (Goleman 2004:82).

However, there is an important caveat to be aware of: one must recognise the limits of group facilitation, in as much as groups are open systems, where all elements of the group's process, structure, and organisational context can influence each other. The facilitator can only improve a group's effectiveness to the extent that the group has direct authority to make changes to the character of these elements (Schwarz, 1994).

CONCLUSION

In summary, this exploratory review of the literature aims to provide an insight, a contextual background, into an under-researched area; outlining emotional intelligence, Value Management facilitation and group effectiveness, and suggests that the emotional intelligence of the VM facilitator can significantly influence the socio-emotional issues encountered in the VM workshop, thereby effectively managing the group process, in order to achieve successful VM outcomes.

It is suggested that VM practitioners, as well as property and construction industry Clients, could benefit from an investigation into the construct of emotional intelligence with regard to VM facilitators, and indeed, all those who participate in any structured, decision framing/making group process; (anecdotal evidence suggests that, even after screening, only a very small proportion of staff that undergo VM facilitator training end up making successful facilitators). Further work is required to explore the contribution of the emotional intelligence, general intelligence ("g"), and

personality traits of VM facilitators in managing group process, and thereby achieving successful outcomes from VM workshops.

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