

Emotional Contagion and Team Effectiveness: A Conceptual Model

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Abstract

Emotional Contagion is increasingly being recognized among researchers as crucial variables in the context of team functioning. Based on findings from existing literature, the paper proposes a conceptual model using individual, interpersonal, and contextual variables that are hypothesized to (a) affect the level of emotional contagion in organizations, and (b) have an impact on team effectiveness. Several hypotheses have been put forth for future analysis. The paper concludes by suggesting scope for future research in the area of emotional contagion vis-à-vis personality - related variables, team dynamics and team effectiveness.

Key Words : Emotions, Emotional Contagion, Emotional Valence ,Team Effectiveness, Relationship Satisfaction

Introduction

"We are used to contrasting the intellect with our passions. The mistake is in thinking of the passions merely as occasional contents of life. They are the defining structures of our existence..."

— Solomon, 2004

Organizations have traditionally believed that a logical and rational approach towards institutional functioning

is the most effective way of maturing. But, recent events have demonstrated that emotions can be very powerful factors in organizational functioning. Until recently, the topic of emotion as an area of study had received very little attention from organizational researchers (Fineman, 1996). This inattention has been a result of long-standing emphasis on cognition and rationality in organizations. However, during the last decade, the concept of emotions in the workplace has been receiving greater focus, owing to the influence of several

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psychological and sociological studies on emotions (Domagalski, 1999).

With team work beginning to play a focal role in many of the organizations, an individual's mood or emotion has been found to have a bearing on the team's emotional state (LaFasto and Larson, 2002). The ability to identify, manage and control one's emotions has gained enormous significance in the management field. Since more and more organizations have transformed into team-based entities, each individual member carries a responsibility of bringing into the team positive sets of emotions, which can spread to the others, and thereby enable a conducive and a nurturing climate of work. The spread of emotions (mostly involuntarily) from an individual to others forms the basis for the current research.

Emotions in Organizations

Emotions have long been thought of as a potent constituent in effective communication in securing successful relationships (Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson, 1994). Not only do they play a vital role wherever people are involved, they can be extended to an organizational setting too. However, given the apparent role that emotions play in our everyday life, they have not been given their due recognition in organizations (Fisher and Ashkanasy, 2000). Robbins (2004) provides two explanations for this: (a) emotions were being thought to be antithesis of rationality and researchers strove to achieve "emotion-free" organizations, and (b) emotions were believed to be harmful and disruptive to the functioning of organizations

In order to reduce destructive emotional episodes and enhance constructive emotional episodes, we need to know the story and the nature of each emotion (Morgan, 1977). By understanding the triggers of each emotion, we may be able to lessen their impact, or at least learn why some of the emotion triggers are so powerful (Ekman, Friesen, and Ellsworth 1982). In addition to this, science is still delving into the ways when each of us experiences emotions the explanation as to why some of us have more intense emotional experiences, or tend to become emotional more or less quickly. It is hard to overestimate the importance of emotions in our lives. Tomkins (1962) said that emotions are what motivate our lives. We organize our lives to maximize the experience of positive emotions and minimize the experience of negative emotions. People want to be happy, and most of us do not want to experience negative emotions like fear, sadness and disgust unless it is in the safe confines of a theatre or between the covers of a novel. We cannot live without these

emotions; the learning here is about how to live better with them (Ekman, 2004).

Emotional management is considered as a prerequisite for performing significantly in any task. Employees bring an emotional component with them to work everyday and they draw on their emotions during times of interaction with others, while introspecting within themselves or at any time of decision-making. Thus, the field of organizational behavior would remain incomplete without considering the role of emotions in workplace behavior (Greenberg and Baron, 2003).

Emotional Contagion and Group Processes: A Review of Literature

'Man is a social animal'... said Aristotle. In the present context of work psychology, individuals exist not by themselves but as members of particular groups. In today's world of synergistic team-work and group membership, it is a known fact that two minds working together achieve better results than a single individual's effort, provided that there is equal effort put in by all the team members. This fact makes the field of emotional contagion more significant to organizations emphasizing group task and accomplishment. There is an increasing emphasis on individuals being good team players who can build and maintain cordial relationships with others. Apart from each member's individual emotional state, a concept that has been increasingly emphasized in organizations recently is that of synergy. When the collective effort of the team exceeds the individual efforts put in by the team members, positive synergy is said to be present. And when individuals come together in a team, it is expected that there will be differences in their emotional states, perceptions and attitudes. In this regard, the spread of emotions occupies a central position. Today, one of the most important criteria for recruitment is the ability of candidates to have tolerance for one another and engage in adaptive interpersonal behaviors. And since human beings are supposed to be rational as well as emotional, the concept of emotions in the workplace has profound significance, more so because of the very nature of competitive business dealings. Along with these lines have been conceptualized an interesting concept known as emotional contagion that can be applied to any social setting. Since organizational success depends not on any individual but on a group as a whole, and there is enough evidence that emotions spread across people and situations (Hatfield et al., 1994), the concept of emotional contagion assumes a great deal of significance to the individuals in an organizational context. Several schools of thought have emerged to explain the diffusion of emotion between

persons. The theory of classical conditioning looks at conditioned and unconditioned aspects of emotions where an emotional state of a person is communicated to another, based on the nature of association between a particular stimulus and the consequent response. Cognitive theory tries to explain emotions from a conscious cognitive perspective, highlighting the importance of processing incoming information. Here, one imagines and simulates the emotional state of another and 'feels' with the person. This is often referred to as empathy (Morgan, 1977). Another premise is that of mimicking and harmonizing the body movements of the other, thereby matching both the movements and the resultant emotional experiences (Hatfield et al., 1994). Further, it is believed that not all individuals have the ability to influence others by their emotional state, nor are all persons equally susceptible to being emotionally infected (Domagalski, 1999). People with heightened awareness and higher emotional expressiveness are said to have greater susceptibility to others' emotions than otherwise. According to Kinicki and Kreitner (2003), emotional contagion has been thought to serve three purposes: (i) to receive emotional meaning, (ii) to enhance the emotional bonding between individuals, and (iii) to obtain continuous feedback of behavior. This is represented in Figure I.

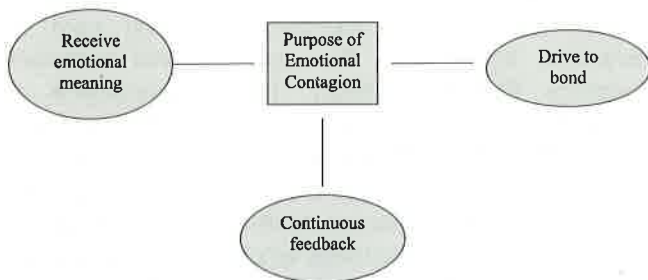


Figure I : Purpose of Emotional Contagion (Kinicki and Kreitner, 2003)

As per Hatfield and her colleagues (1994), three factors reinforce the importance of investigating the nature of emotional contagion, which has been presented in Figure II.

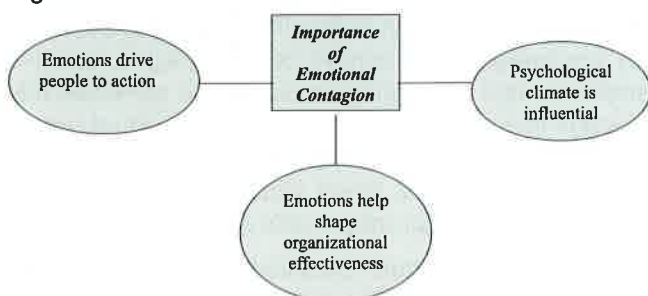


Figure II: Importance of Emotional Contagion (Hatfield, 1994)

Most organizational leaders and managers have today accepted that collaborative teamwork is an effective tool for managing complex tasks in a rapidly changing environment (LaFasto and Larson, 2002). Recently, researchers have investigated the extent to which individual affect, mood, or emotion of team members combines into a collective process that influences how teams operate. Researchers, who have addressed collective affect, propose different viewpoints on how this process occurs. De Rivera (1992) defines emotional climate as the emotional relationships between members of a nation. Paez, Asun, and Gonzalez (1994) posit that an emotional climate is based on shared emotions, beliefs, and social representations, and that it represents a collective phenomenon that is not just an aggregation of individual emotions. Using Hatfield and colleagues' (Hatfield et al., 1994) definition of emotional contagion (a process of unconscious and automatic mimicry of other's nonverbal behavior), Barsade (2002) studies emotional contagion in work groups. Bartel and Saavedra (2000) define collective mood as the mood shared by group members. George (1990) defines affective tone as consistent affective reactions within the groups. Totterdell, Kellett, Teuchmann, and Briner (1998) define mood linkage as similar to interpersonal mood that operate within work teams. While individual processes are important, the onus will be to discover how emotions combined in a collective dynamic process can impact the effectiveness of teams. As organizations increasingly evolve towards a greater team orientation, it appears relevant to better understand shared processes, whether emotions or other team processes. Therefore there is a need to comprehend the mechanisms of how emotions spread across people and situations.

Barsade's (2002) comprehensive work covers several aspects of group orientation such as the mechanism by which mood transfer occurs in groups, specifically through two factors (i) emotional energy displayed and (ii) emotional valence, which could be either positive or negative. Another interesting proposition put forth by Barsade (2002) is the possibility of applying the concept of emotional contagion as an organizational tool or intervention for effective organizational processes like organizational culture, socialization, and leadership processes and concludes by saying that emotional contagion affects the feelings, cognitions and behavior of group members. For a healthier organizational climate, the concept of emotional contagion has to be harnessed and nurtured.

Emotional Contagion and Organizational Functioning

In the light of organizational functioning, there are studies linking emotional contagion with power, leadership, and empathy. Hsee, Hatfield and Carlson's (1990) study of whether people experience others' feelings and moods was tested and findings revealed clear presence of emotional contagion in the participant sample. Halverson (2004) suggests that the concept of 'affect' is influential in its dealings with leadership, especially charismatic and transformational leadership. It was observed that leaders expressing positive affect elicit more positive follower attributions and better performance. At an individual level, Omdahl and O'Donnell (1999) have established that three emotional communication variables, namely emotional contagion, empathic concern and communicative effectiveness affected an individual's ability to cope under stress. However, a similar linkage is yet to be tested in a group context.

Gaps in Literature

A review of the past literature thus yields the following key findings:

- emotions, moods and affect are conceptually different
- team mood is influenced by moods of individual members
- mood congruence in teams is proportionately related to emotional valence
- individual differences exist in the levels of susceptibility to others' emotions
- powerful people can be expected to be more sensitive to others' emotions
- emotional contagion influences follower affect and performance in the context of leadership
- interpersonal trust, group composition, cohesiveness, and interpersonal congruence influence the spread of emotions in groups, and thereby affects group performance, and
- mood transfer occurs across groups through emotional valence and energy levels

Past research has revealed that certain personal variables like susceptibility to others' emotions (Doherty, 1997), empathy (Omdahl and O'Donnell, 1999; Doherty, 1997), and the affiliation factor (Gump and Kulik, 1997; Doherty, 1997) affect the level of emotional contagion. In addition, interpersonal variables such as emotional bonding between individuals (Hess and Blairy, 2001),

the extent to which people know each other well (Barsade, 2002), and trust (Omdahl and O'Donnell, 1999) have been found to have an influence on emotional contagion. Apart from these individual and interpersonal variables, there are certain factors outside the purview of an individual that can also affect the level of emotional contagion, which are the contextual factors. Some of the external variables that have been studied include team composition and its influence on emotions (Kelly and Barsade, 2001; Keinan and Koren, 2002), nature of job characteristics in relation to emotional aspects (Fisher and Ashkanasy, 2000), leadership and its effect on emotional contagion (Halverson, 2004), and psychological climate (Isaksen and Lauer, 1998).

Until recently, work on emotional contagion and related areas have focused predominantly on a cause and effect relationship between emotional contagion and several variables such as morale, cooperativeness, conflict, emotional valence (positive or negative), emotional energy (high or low), power, leadership, stress, empathy, organizational commitment, communication, service quality and customer perceptions. Even though emotional contagion is both individual and an interpersonal phenomenon, no studies are centering on these issues jointly. Furthermore, implicit attention has been paid to collective emotion in the organizational behavior literature (Barsade, 2002). The advancement of literature in psychology relating to emotions has also allowed for a more focused and explicit examination of collective emotion. George (1989, 1990), George and Brief (1992) have established that not only do group emotions exist, but also these emotions, which they call group affective tone, can influence work outcomes. Emotional contagion can also serve as a method for infusing individuals and groups with more positive or negative moods, which in turn, can influence cognitions, behaviors, and attitudes (Lazarus, 1991; Damasio, 1994). Literature has already established that collective emotion influences individuals' emotions. This provides both academicians and practicing managers a fulcrum around which they can build a healthy organization by (a) encouraging the spread of constructive, positive emotions, and (b) helping employees to constructively manage their negative emotions. If an individual comes to work with a disruptive emotion (like anger, jealousy), in all probability, that mood would get transmitted to others, resulting in an unfavorable working climate

Drawing from the gaps identified from literature, and given these evidences, it is seen that several individual, interpersonal variables influence the level of emotional contagion. But a collective approach to establish a

cause- effect relationship with individual, interpersonal and some contextual factors are yet to be made. Furthermore, review of prior literature has not revealed significant efforts toward making use of emotional contagion as a tool for bringing about better team functioning through spread of constructive, positive emotions. Along these lines therefore, a conceptual model has been proposed in the following sections, deriving its source from theory, past research, and an exploratory in-depth interview conducted with certain select teams. This model can be best appreciated in the context of team-based organizations and team members working together on projects. The first stage of the conceptual model is presented in Figure III as follows.

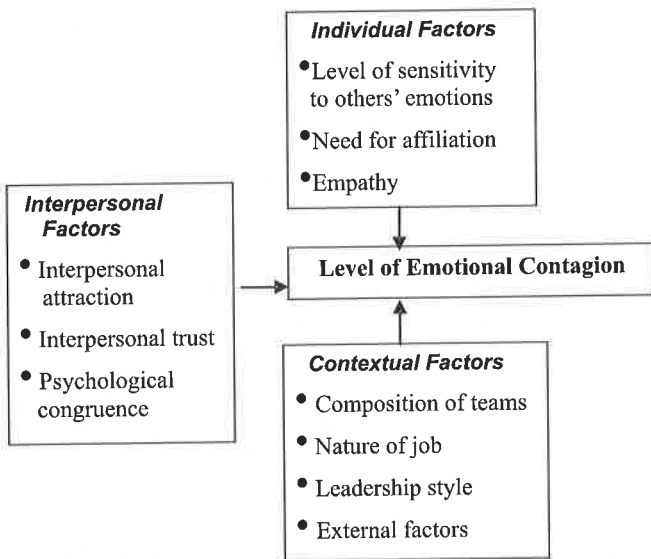


Figure III : First stage of the Conceptual Model

In the present study, the extent of spread of emotions in a team is therefore proposed to be affected by a combination of individual, interpersonal, and contextual factors and that the contagion of emotions is expected to result ultimately in enhanced team effectiveness. There have been several studies, applying a variety of approaches measuring team effectiveness, some of them being Cohen and Bailey (1997), Mathieu, Gilson and Ruddy (2006), Rajendran (2005). In the model, team effectiveness includes two sets of measures- objective and subjective approaches that will be elaborated in the following sections. Therefore, incorporating the above intervention and construct in the proposed model, the final model is represented in Figure IV as given below:

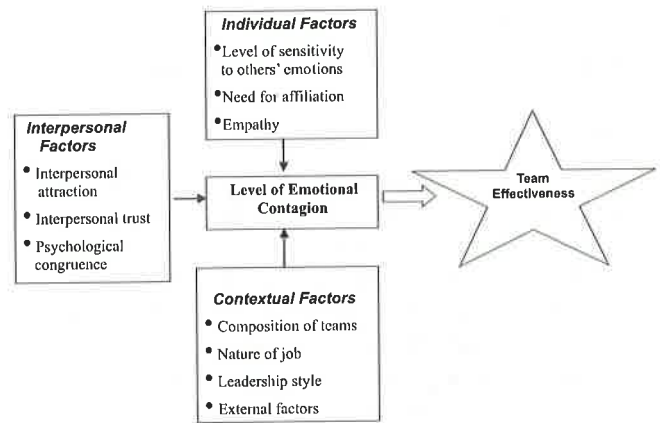


Figure IV : The Proposed Conceptual Model

The model proposes to address two key issues. Firstly, the level of emotional contagion is expected to be affected by three factors, namely (a) Individual (b) Interpersonal, and (c) Contextual. Secondly, the level of emotional contagion present in a team is expected to affect team effectiveness.

Variables in the Model

Individual Factors

Individuals bring in their own sets of emotions, thoughts and perceptions into the workplace and these states cannot be perceived as independent of the team or the organization. Three variables, namely the extent to which an individual is sensitive to others' emotions, the need a team member has to relate to others in his or her team/ organization (Gump and Kulik, 1997; Doherty, 1997) and empathy (Omdahl and O'Donnell, 1999; Doherty, 1997) are seen as predictors to the level of emotional contagion present in a team.

- Sensitivity to others' emotions: It has been observed that certain people are more attuned to others' emotional states, and sometimes even to the slightest change in their moods, than others (Feldman, 1994). Therefore, it may be easier for some to understand, and therefore better equipped to build strong interpersonal relationships. It is thereby postulated that individuals who are more sensitive to others' emotions would influence the level of emotional contagion more than people who are not.

- Need for affiliation: As is believed by most, individuals cannot lead islands of existence (Barsade, 2002). We are interdependent at both physical and emotional levels. And it is only human to want to connect with others, to please others and synchronize ourselves to others (Hatfield et al., 1994). In order to establish and

maintain healthy relationships with others, we normally try to mimic and bring in congruence in relation to others moods (Hatfield et al., 1994). And the theory of need for affiliation can be thought of as one of the sources for the level of emotional contagion.

(c) Empathy: In organizations, there will be certain individuals who, by their sheer ability to listen and 'feel' with the other person, gain their confidence and trust. Therefore, these people are provided with several opportunities (as part of these informal counseling sessions) to catch the positive or (and) negative moods of others. This can act as a powerful tool for emotional contagion to occur (Omdahl and O'Donnell, 1999; Doherty, 1997).

Interpersonal Factors

The concept of emotional contagion can be best visualized in connection with exchanges of emotional states between people. Understandably, this concept cannot exist in individualistic situations. The spread of emotions, therefore, would involve a combination of factors, which might be hypothesized to affect how much of emotional contagion is present in a particular team.

The variables thus thought to be influential to the level of emotional contagion are:

(a) Interpersonal attraction: Baron (2003) has mentioned an interesting point in their observation of how people (team members in this context) get attracted to one other. Depending on the strength of each person's affiliation motivation, they may be more or less motivated to establish a relationship (Byrne, 1961). Specifically, in this context of emotional contagion, when a group or a team of people feel comfortable and like the company of others, there may be a high probability that efforts are taken by the members to synchronize their responses in relation to the other person, thus leading to a high degree of spread of emotions.

(b) Interpersonal trust: Trust can be operationally defined in this study as the degree to which one believes that the other person will protect him/her and not cause any harm-be it physical or psychological (Newstrom and Davis, 2002). This construct may be more intense than attraction because of the security and confidence people attach to the concerned other that can act as a motivator to the person to engage in harmonizing activities like imitating the other's moods and matching it with the others.

(c) Psychological Congruence: It is often seen that people get more affected by those they are emotionally

bonded in respect to words, feelings, and actions than with those who are just acquaintances (Hess & Blairy, 2001). This term is especially customized to this study. In a particular team, there may be dyads or cliques who are more close to each other than to others. And it is likely that they are more susceptible to their friends' emotional states than to the other team members. And because of this aspect of psychological or emotional attachment to another person, there are higher chances of catching the other person's mood. On the contrary, there may be individuals who are immune to their team members' moods and are either totally unaware or unaffected by their emotions, thus not 'helping' the spread of emotions.

Contextual Factors

Issues concerning human beings' cognitive, affective and conative aspects can give rise to a nature-nurture debate. Whether the level of emotional contagion would change due to factors outside the purview of individual members is an aspect yet to be explored. This issue is dealt with in the model by three variables that are hypothesized to affect a team's level of emotional contagion as explained below.

- Composition of teams: Several studies on team composition, its effect on emotions (Kelly and Barsade, 2001), and its link to team effectiveness have been explored (Keinan and Koren, 2002). Team members have to be chosen in a manner conducive to effective functioning of the team. Aspects such as homogeneity and heterogeneity, size of the team, degree of similarity of factors like level of intelligence, nature of personality, experience, educational qualifications, socio-economic status and the like can all influence the extent to which emotional contagion is present in a team.

- Nature of tasks: Organizations today are increasingly going in for team-based work, and hence need individuals with the aptitude or at the least the willingness to work with others. There have been few studies in the past that have linked emotions and job characteristics (Fisher and Ashkanasy, 2000).

- Leadership: The style of leadership followed in a team has been specifically addressed in respect to transformational leadership (Halverson, 2004). It provides us with opportunities to determine whether other leadership styles also have an influence on the level of emotional contagion. In addition, in-depth interviews conducted by the authors during the exploratory surveys also reinforced the importance of leadership in the context of team functioning.

- External factors: Apart from the above mentioned contextual factors, there have been other situational

aspects, namely (i) psychological climate, and (ii) physical atmosphere that are proposed to affect the extent to which there is spread of emotions in a team.

Level of Emotional Contagion

Let us consider a situation when a team achieves a high level of emotional contagion. A valid question arises as to whether spread of even negative emotions is to be considered here. Obviously, it is harmful to a team's morale if members of a team spread disruptive emotions onto others. That brings us to the issue of the valence of emotions and whether the concerned emotion is favorable or unfavorable to the team's psychological climate. On these lines, if a team scores high on the emotional contagion scale, the results would have to be cautiously interpreted. Therefore it would benefit organizations to not only encourage constructive, positive emotional states in team members but also provide them with the means to manage negative emotions.

Team Effectiveness

Success stories of teams that have found a place in history may not have achieved extraordinary results quantitatively (although it is an important criterion of success in most organizations) but as a team it would have shown exemplary spirit of synergy and team work. There have been several studies in the past that have linked related constructs of emotions such as emotional intelligence and team performance (Jordan and Troth, 2004). The present study proposes to establish that the level of emotional contagion would be affected through individual, interpersonal, and contextual factors which in turn would result in better team functioning in terms of certain objective factors like number of projects undertaken, the timeliness of completion of the projects etc., and few qualitative factors like degree of morale in the team (Barsade, 2002; Lindsay, Manning and Petrick, 1992), involvement to the team's tasks (Cohen, Ledford Jr. and Spreitzer, 1996), and commitment to work (Cohen, and Bailey, 1997). The intention of this study would be to show that the supposedly abstract construct such as emotions and emotional management could be crucial variables in a team's performance. Keeping in mind the theory and review of past work, we have come up with certain propositions, which are mentioned below.

Hypotheses

Drawing from work done in the past, the following hypotheses have been framed under three categories, namely individual, interpersonal, and contextual.

Individual Factors:

- Omdahl and O'Donnell (1999) have studied emotional contagion in relation to empathy and stress issues at the individual level. In the event of studying emotional contagion in the context of team functioning, the following hypothesis has been framed.

P1: The level of empathy will affect level of emotional contagion more than the level of sensitivity to others' emotions and need for affiliation.

- The construct of affiliation has been studied by Gump and Kulik (1997) in relation to emotional contagion and stress at a personal level. Extrapolating this concept to an organizational setting, the following is hypothesized.

P2: Level of sensitivity to others' emotions will affect level of emotional contagion more than need for affiliation.

Interpersonal Factors :

Hess & Blairy (2001) have brought out an aspect of emotional bonding, when they studied the situations under which imitation and mimicry occurred. Along these lines, the authors propose to relate the concept of psychological congruence and emotional contagion in the following hypothesis.

P3: Psychological congruence will affect level of emotional contagion more than interpersonal attraction and interpersonal trust.

- The interpersonal variable of attraction has been studied in detail by Baron and Byrne (2004), although more in the social milieu. The following idea has been hypothesized to be tested in an organizational team-based setting.

P4: Interpersonal attraction will affect emotional contagion more than interpersonal trust.

Contextual Factors:

- Gender differences in relation to mimicry and imitation have been studied by Helland (2001). Results relating to the evidence of mimicry in women are not conclusive, and therefore the authors have framed the following hypothesis to be tested with reference to the spread of emotions in an organizational team setting.

P5: Women will have more susceptibility to others' emotions than men.

- Studies by Bradner and Mark (2003) showed positive effect of team size on team participation, commitment, goal awareness, improved rapport with other members of the team, and enhanced understanding of other members' personalities and communication styles. In order to establish a link between team sizes to emotional contagion, the following hypothesis has been

framed.

P6: A smaller sized team will evidence a higher level of emotional contagion than a larger sized team.

- In continuation with the demographic factors of team composition, personality issues like type A and type B personalities have been studied by Keinan and Koren (2002). Results revealed that members of a team were more satisfied when teamed with same-type members than a mix of different personality types. Kelly and Barsade (2001) have focused on team composition concerning homogeneity and heterogeneity of team members. Nevertheless, a direct link between emotional contagion and homogeneity and heterogeneity of team members has not been established. The following hypothesis attempts to establish a relationship.

P7: A homogenous team will have a higher level of emotional contagion than a heterogeneous team.

- The question of whether job characteristics are related to affect has been studied by Saavedra and Kwun (2000). Results revealed that perceptions of select job characteristics explained the variance in pleasant and unpleasant affect. Perceiving complexity of job tasks as an important aspect of job characteristics, a direct link to emotional contagion has been attempted by the authors in their model, with the following hypothesis.

P8: The extent of complexities in a job task will affect the level of emotional contagion.

- Halverson (2004) has focused predominantly on transformational and transactional leadership styles and its relation to emotional contagion. Whether the other styles of leadership affect the level of emotional contagion is a question that is expected to be answered by the following hypothesis.

P9: The style of leadership will affect the level of emotional contagion.

- Tsai's (2001) study provides the basis for linking nature of climate in an organization to emotional valence. They have established that there is a positive relationship between psychological climate of friendliness and employees' displayed positive emotions. To test whether there exists any relationship between the psychological climate of a team and the level of spread of emotions can thus be established using the following hypothesis.

P10: A favorable psychological climate will affect the level of emotional contagion more than an unfavorable climate. (Wei-Chi, 2001)

In addition to the individual, interpersonal, and contextual factors, few ideas have been framed to be

tested, keeping in mind certain findings from past literature. They are presented below:

- Interpersonal factors such as relationship satisfaction and commitment have been studied by Abdul-Muhmin (2005), who has focused on these in the context of industrial markets. The question of whether certain other interpersonal factors such as interpersonal attraction, psychological congruence can affect the level of emotional contagion is expected to be answered by framing in the following hypothesis.

P11: Interpersonal factors will affect level of emotional contagion more than individual and contextual factors.

- Miao-Ling Fang (2006) and Chiaburu and Tekleab (2005) have studied a set of individual factors such as training motivation and employee performance, goal orientation and their effect on effectiveness. Deriving the idea from this, the following hypothesis has been framed.

P12: Individual factors will affect level of emotional contagion more than contextual factors.

The Road Ahead

The present paper has attempted to introduce the conceptual model developed by the authors based on the review of literature in the area of emotional contagion. Several studies have been undertaken abroad in the area of psychology of stress, group processes, organizational functioning, and the like. The nature of mood transfer across organizational teams has been examined and paves way for future examination in this area. Individual attributes such as type of personality, level of susceptibility to emotions, need for affiliation and power, have not been studied in the past, specifically in relation to emotional contagion, though extensively in other related areas. This presents opportunities for further research in these topics. In addition to the personal variables that may affect the extent of spread of emotions, interpersonal factors such as the nature of relationship and degree of trust between individuals also provide scope for further investigation. Since emotional contagion is an interpersonal phenomenon (Hatfield et. al, 1994), there is need for more research in this aspect.

Managerial Implications

On an institution - wide basis, culture and socialization are topics that lend themselves to exploration. In the field of customer relations, the mechanism of how employees of an organization influence customer affect via their emotional expressions have been studied in detail. In addition to this, how customers perceive service providers with regard to the nature of service

they received from the employees have also been dealt with. Important organizational issues like leadership and power have been linked to emotional contagion. Nevertheless, a large gap exists in studying emotional contagion in a collective manner in order to understand the factors contributing to the spread of emotions. Each individual's emotions, expressed in a group, can spread that particular emotion to the others too. Not stopping with just certain areas of social networking, this would gradually be expected to permeate all aspects of social functioning soon. It is expected that organizations would recognize the emotions that individual members of teams bring to and spread in the workplace. Institutions would need to ensure that only positive, constructive emotions spread across team members, thus resulting in effective performance. People do not live in emotional islands; rather, group members experience moods at work, these moods ripple out and, in the process, influence not only other group members' emotions but their group dynamics and individual cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors as well. Thus, emotional contagion, through its direct and indirect influence on employees' and work teams' emotions, judgments, and behaviors, can lead to subtle but important ripple effects in groups and organizations (Barsade, 2002). Organizations would need to be aware and proactive in managing this phenomenon.

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