

The Importance of Emotional Intelligence in Direct Leadership in the Army of the Czech Republic

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Abstract: The article deals with application of emotional intelligence for leaders of direct leadership in the Army of the Czech Republic and its connection with the social climate of their units. Emotional intelligence leadership and social climate is a connection that is currently appearing in research activity and doctrinal army documents and explores. The authors try to find and evaluate the benefits and limits of EI in the field of preparation military personnel. From the currently available research, it is precisely the construct of emotional intelligence that appears as one of the possible ways to develop the necessary skills of commanders to facilitate their work with subordinates. Emotional intelligence involves the ability to correctly identify emotions in oneself and in others, to understand emotions and their language, to manage emotions in oneself and in others and use emotions to support cognitive activities and to motivate adaptive behaviour. Direct leadership is the level where leading people is face to face. These are units, where subordinates are used to seeing their commanders every day. For these functions it is still possible and important to create strong relationships, close cooperation and mutual knowledge of all members of the unit. Commanders facing high decision-making demands in an unstable environment. They build working one's teams with a favourable social climate and support their psychological resilience subordinates. These aspects are decisive for ensuring the tasks of the unit. The main method is quantitative research, which is carried out using a standardized test MSCEIT emotional intelligence in selected commanders of six units and a non-standardized questionnaire "social climate on the units" in their subordinates. Based on obtained results is submitted methodology of development of emotional intelligence for leaders of a platoon. It contains standard parameters. The thesis also formulates recommendation for pedagogical and research activities and output of doctrine leadership.

Keywords: Army Leadership, Direct Leadership, Emotions, Emotional Intelligence, Social Climate

1. Introduction

The article deals with direct leadership in the Army of the Czech Republic with a focus on the application of emotional intelligence for direct leadership commanders and its connection with the social climate of the units. Emotional Intelligence (EI), leadership, and social climate is a connection that is currently being explored. The authors seek to identify and evaluate the benefits and limitations of EI in the preparation of military personnel.

The searching for new ways to modernise the training of personnel is important to ensure the fulfilment of the tasks of the Czech Armed Forces and to maintain the standards of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Considering the construction concept of the Czech Armed Forces, which plans for an increase of approximately 2,400 new soldiers per year, the area of training and development of personnel is a priority. The University of Defence will play a key role in attracting candidates for service at the lowest officer ranks, as well as direct recruitment and career progression (Concept of the build-up of the AFK 2030, 2019). The preparation of personnel is also essential in view of the planned numbers of deployed soldiers in foreign operations in the coming years. In 2021, 851 soldiers are expected to be deployed and in 2022, 954 soldiers are planned to be deployed (Fajnor, 2020).

The direct leadership is the level where soldiers lead face-to-face. These are units where subordinates are used to seeing their leaders every day (teams, squads, platoons and companies). The paper deals with the possibilities of application of emotional intelligence for the positions of company commander, deputy company commander, platoon commander and his deputy in mechanized troops in the conditions of the Czech Army. For these functions it is still possible and important to form strong relationships, close cooperation and mutual knowledge of all members of the unit. Commanders face to high demands for decision-making in an unstable environment. They build functioning teams with a favourable social climate and support the psychological resilience of their subordinates.

Based on currently available knowledge, the construct of emotional intelligence appears to be one possible way to develop the necessary skills of commanders to facilitate their work with subordinates. Emotional intelligence includes the ability to correctly identify emotions in oneself and others, to understand emotions and their language, to manage emotions in oneself and others, and to use emotions to support cognitive activities and to motivate adaptive behaviour. It has a variety of applications. EI is seen as a predictor of workplace success due to its significant association with transformational leadership.

All of the above aspects are also crucial for the direct leadership commanders and have an impact on their daily job duties. If these aspects are developed and supported, a favourable social climate is created in the workplace, which has an impact on the performance of job duties and the satisfaction of subordinates in the unit. The social climate is characterised as the nature of the prevailing interrelationships between the individual members of the work group and their overall atonements. It has an impact on the working and behaviour of individuals (Jarošová, Pauknerová & Lorencová, 2016).

Research findings show that emotional intelligence supports leadership, including developing a coherent vision of goals, instilling the value of subordinates' work, creating a favourable social climate, and cultivating adaptability to change (Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; George, 2000). A military unit is a complex organism where the commander plays a decisive role. The social climate also plays a key role in the functioning of the unit and the fulfilment of its objectives, which influences the overall functioning of the relationship between the commander and his subordinates. In his daily activities, there is a two-way exchange of emotional information, in particular the ability to identify the significance of social signals in the behaviour of subordinates on the one hand and to respond appropriately on the other.

Based on these findings, the key question is in what form to include emotional intelligence in the system of training commanders at the direct leadership level in the Czech Republic in order to strengthen the fulfilment of the needs of the functioning of their unit.

2. Theoretical Background

The construct of emotional intelligence can help prevent social and interpersonal problems and increase the likelihood of success in interpersonal relationships. It can influence the conditions for forming strong, harmonious, social relationships between soldiers and their commanders, especially in the smallest military units.

The literature and military leadership doctrines are emerging emotional intelligence and its importance in leading military members. Based on current research findings, it appears that emotional intelligence and social climate play a role in the development of military leaders (Penrod, 2010).

The concept of emotional intelligence is currently the subject of intense research not only in the field of leadership. This concept was first mentioned by American psychologists Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer in the wake of Howard Gardner's research. The authors tried to point out that society perceives emotions as a disturbing element of mental processes, and it is necessary to keep it under control. As such, they defined the concept as a subset of social intelligence, which includes the ability to monitor feelings and emotions in oneself and others, to discriminate them, and to use the information obtained to direct one's thinking and activities (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000).

Emotional intelligence is a fundamental element of human behaviour that is distinct from our intellect (Bradberry & Graves, 2013). The concept of emotional intelligence was popularized among the general public by American psychologist Daniel Goleman, who pointed out that emotional dispositions and personality traits, especially those that influence the quality of interpersonal relationships, are critical (Goleman, 2011).

For the purposes of the article, a four-component model of emotional intelligence was used, which is based on a questionnaire survey in the practical part (Schulze & Roberts, 2007). In this model, the authors define emotional intelligence as a set of emotional abilities that can be divided into four areas perceiving, assessing and expressing emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions and their interpretation, emotion management, emotion regulation supporting emotional and intellectual growth.

While some individuals tend to be considered potential leaders, on the other hand, some individuals demonstrate leadership ability on measures of emotional intelligence due to their insensitivity and inability to work in a group, inability to express themselves (Bar-on, Handley & Fund, 2006).

A close link was found between the selection, assessment and development of leaders and emotional intelligence in a study by Johnson and Johnson. Applying a questionnaire called the Emotional Competence Inventory, results were obtained from supervisors, employees, and colleagues. This questionnaire includes 4 aspects of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skills. Gowing found that emotional intelligence can be used in the selection, evaluation and development of future leaders. These results are supported by the view of Goleman, who believed that leadership development is something that occurs over time. (Gowing, Leary, Brienza, Cavallo & Crain, 2006).

Emotional intelligence research has been conducted at the federal Finance and Accounting Services Agency. Employees of the organization participated in emotional intelligence training. Prior to the training, their emotional intelligence level was measured using the "Emotional Competence Inventory". After the implementation, the measurement was repeated using the same questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire increased after the training. The result of the study provided evidence that emotional intelligence can be trained, developed and linked to leadership (Gowing, Leary, Brienza, Cavallo & Crain, 2006).

Interpersonal skills are needed for current and future military leaders. Bar-on defined that interpersonal intelligence is closely linked to emotional intelligence. These competencies consist of active listening, trust, and balancing demands for the well-being of others. According to Goleman, these competencies are closely related to emotional intelligence (Bar-on, 2007).

In 2010, quantitative research was conducted at the Military Education Center, where the subject of the study was the relationship of emotional intelligence of the employees of the Military Education Center and whether it plays a role in unit performance when considering organizational climate and job satisfaction. A positive statistical relationship was found between emotional intelligence and job performance. Another recommendation of the research was to expand the sample of respondents, to include emotional intelligence training in professional development (Penrod, 2010).

In 2015 in the United States, the Leadership Faculty explored emotional intelligence and its relationship to the competency model of the military leader. The research was conducted with members of the direct and organizational leadership. Based on the qualitative research, the following suggestions are recommended: (1) conduct quantitative studies examining the relationship between emotional intelligence competencies and the attributes and competencies of the military leader; (2) formally integrate emotional intelligence competencies into the military leadership doctrine; (3) and incorporate emotional intelligence development programs at all levels of leadership and education within the military (Clark, 2015).

In 2016, quantitative research was conducted to look for a relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy in U.S. military leaders. The research used the standardized MSCEIT emotional intelligence questionnaire. The author of that study recommended training emotional intelligence and self efficacy in military commanders to influence decision making and confidence in their own decisions (Hudson, 2016).

In 2017, research was conducted on the influence of emotional experiences on emotional intelligence in U.S. military commanders. The purpose of this quantitative study was to evaluate and compare the emotional intelligence scores of military commanders who served in high stress environments with commanders who did not serve in such conditions. The WLEIS questionnaire was administered to measure emotional intelligence levels (Crosby, 2017). Other research that focuses on the relationship between emotional intelligence, performance, and leadership is shown in Table 1 above.

Table 1: An overview of selected research on the issue

Studies	Participants	Research Design	Results
Kambeya (2008)	5 lecturers	Qualitative	Interpersonal skills played a role in the level of performance of the teachers. Teachers' attitude and productivity were influenced by principals' interpersonal communication.
Barbuto a Burbach (2006)	80 selected public officials and 388 of their subordinates	Quantitative (questionnaire)	A positive relationship was found between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. Leaders with higher levels of empathy were more likely to identify themselves as transformational leaders.
Cook (2006)	143 directors	Quantitative (questionnaire)	There was no statistically significant difference between emotional intelligence, age, gender, and length of experience. The level of emotional intelligence affected the performance of the individual.
Eichmann (2009)	51 leaders	Combined research	Emotional intelligence improves over the course of training. Training results showed growth in stress management. There were changes in behavioural practices after training. Positive feedback, better teamwork, active listening and showing empathy.

Studies	Participants	Research Design	Results
Military Training and Commander Development (Walters, 2018)	40 000 soldiers and civilian workers	Combined research, Questionnaires, Interviews, Focus groups	Four areas were defined for the research (lifelong learning, interpersonal capability, military culture and accountability).

3. Methodology

3.1 Purpose of Study

Based on the clarification of the issue, the research objective was set as follows. The main objective of the research investigation of this thesis is to identify the level of emotional intelligence of the direct leadership commanders and to assess the social climate of their individual subordinates and to compare the findings between the different companies. A similar approach was implemented in the United States at Georgia Southern University, where the author identified the emotional intelligence level of leaders, organizational climate, and job satisfaction of their subordinates in a military training environment.

In relation to the stated research objective, the following research questions are formulated in the first phase of the research:

VO 1: What is the level of emotional intelligence of the selected direct leadership leaders?

VO 2: Does the level of emotional intelligence of the selected direct leadership commanders differ from the normative values?

The following hypotheses are formulated in relation to the stated research objective in the second phase of the research:

H1A: The mean values of the measures of organizational work environment conditions are not the same for each company.

H2A: The mean values of the measures of working relationships and cooperation are not the same for each company.

H3A: The mean values of the measure of the working behaviour of commanders in each company are not the same.

H4A: The mean values of the measures of job satisfaction are not the same for each company.

H5A: There are statistically significant differences between the frequencies of responses to question 45 for each company.

H6A: There is a statistically significant relationship between responses across age groups for each company.

Parametric and non-parametric approaches were used for hypothesis testing (Kruskal-Wallis test, Wilcoxon test, One-factor ANOVA, two-sample Wilcoxon test and Chi2 test of homogeneity).

3.2 Characteristics of the Sample in the First Stage

The sample of respondents consisted of members of the Army of the Czech Republic currently serving with the 7th Mechanised Brigade in Hranice na Moravě and Přáslavice. The sample consisted of 30 direct leadership commanders from 6 selected companies. A specific overview of the numbers is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Composition of respondents

Hranice na Moravě	1/71	5
	2/71	5
	3/71	5
Přáslavice	1/72	5
	2/72	5
	3/72	5
Total		30

(own study)

On January 14, 2019 at the Commanders' Meeting, commanders were contacted and asked to participate in the research. Due to the challenging availability of the sample, a non-probability method was chosen: opportunity sampling based on availability. The following characteristics were observed for respondents: age, gender, rank, position, level of education attained, and time in command. The return rate of the questionnaire was 100%, thus 30 questionnaires were evaluated.

3.3 Characteristics of the Study Population in the Second Stage

The sample of respondents consisted of members of the Army of the Czech Republic currently serving with the 7th Mechanised Brigade in Hranice na Moravě and Příkladovice. These were 295 subordinates of individual company commanders according to the table below: Number of subordinates in each company.

Table 3: Composition of respondent in second stage

Hranice na Moravě	1/71	50
	2/71	38
	3/71	20
Příkladovice	1/72	40
	2/72	78
	3/72	69
	Total	295

(own study)

The following characteristics were observed for the respondents: age, gender, rank, position, time in position. The representation of different functions was diverse.

3.4 Measurement Tool

According to the set objectives, quantitative research was chosen, which was divided into two stages. In the first stage, in order to obtain research data and verify the research assumptions, quantitative research was conducted using the standardized questionnaire MSCEIT - emotional intelligence test. This is a performance test, where instead of answering questions regarding the assessment of their emotional abilities, individuals directly perform tasks and solve emotional problems. MSCEIT provides two basic methods of administration: a standard electronic online form, or a paper form using a test booklet and record sheet. However, the answers must then be transcribed into the "Hogrefe Testsystem 4" computer system for evaluation. In the second stage, quantitative research was carried out using a non-standardized questionnaire of own construction, the "Company Social Climate Questionnaire". It contains 46 items that describe the current nature of the social climate in the selected company.

3.5 Result and Discussion

The purpose of the research investigation is to identify the level of emotional intelligence of direct leadership commanders and to assess the social climate of their individual subordinates and to compare the findings between companies.

In the first phase, the following two research questions were formulated.

Q1: What is the level of emotional intelligence of the selected direct leadership leaders?

Based on the evaluation of the results from the first phase, the level of emotional intelligence and its individual areas were identified in 30 direct leadership commanders from 6 selected companies currently serving with the 7th Mechanised Brigade in Hranice na Moravě and Příkladovice. The resulting emotional quotient for each respondent is shown in the table below.

Table 4: The resulting emotional quotient for each respondent

1/71	1/72	1/73	1/72	2/72	3/72
66	78	89	91	82	97

1/71	1/72	1/73	1/72	2/72	3/72
89	101	83	102	91	82
101	64	69	82	118	76
53	91	71	88	99	102
98	109	59	98	99	80

(own study)

VO 2: Does the level of emotional intelligence of the selected direct leadership commanders differ from the normative values?

Based on the evaluation of the result of the first phase and the answer to the first research question, it can be said that the level of emotional intelligence of the selected 30 direct leadership commanders differs from the normative values. The results compared to the normative values classified the commanders into three categories. For 13 commanders, the result is below average compared to the normative sample. For 16 commanders the result is average compared to the normative sample and for 1 commander the result is above average. The results show that there is room for the development of emotional intelligence. Based on the research, it shows that there are ways and means of developing EI and describes the benefits of development.

In the second phase, the six hypotheses below were formulated.

H1A: The mean values of the measures of organizational work environment conditions are not the same for each company.

- The hypothesis was accepted. Significantly different pairs were for the 3/71 and 1/72 companies and also for the 3/71 and 3/72 companies.

H2A: The means of the measures of working relationships and cooperation are not the same for each company.

- Hypothesis accepted. Significantly different pairs were for company 1/71 and 3/72, 3/71 and 1/72, 3/71 and 2/72, and 3/71 and 3/72.

H3A: The means of the measures of work behaviour of commanders are not the same for each company.

- Hypothesis accepted. Significantly different pairs were for 3/71 and 1/72 companies.

H4A: The means of job satisfaction measures are not the same for each company.

- The hypothesis was accepted. Significantly different pairs were for 3/71 and 3/72 companies.

H5A: There are statistically significant differences between the frequencies of responses to question 45 for each company.

- The hypothesis was not accepted.

H6A: There is a statistically significant relationship between the responses in the age groups for each company.

- The hypothesis was accepted only for Company 2/72 when all question blocks were combined.

Based on the findings and the literature reviewed, this subsection describes the results related to emotional intelligence as well as the results assessing social climate.

The initial step in answering the research questions was to identify emotional intelligence and compare it to a normative sample of selected direct leadership commanders in the Army. The results show that sixteen respondents fall within a wider range of average compared to the normative sample. One respondent is categorized as above average compared to the comparison sample and thirteen respondents fall into the below average category.

According to the EQ result of the respondents, the following can be summarized. Eleven respondents are advised to further improve their emotional intelligence, and five respondents are advised to develop their EQ intensively. For thirteen respondents, EQ could be increased to above average ability by training. Only one respondent who scored high is not recommended to increase EQ as his score is assessed as above average.

The results of the first stage of the research show that there is room for the development of emotional intelligence, and it is advisable to look for ways to develop it and to design a training methodology for members

of the A.C.R. Emotional intelligence describes the ability to intentionally engage emotions in social and analytical problem-solving processes. Emotional intelligence is a function in which thinking and feeling meet, and it is an important ability for the correct handling of one's own emotions and the emotions of other people. These skills are crucial to leadership practice.

Following the EQ survey, subordinates' perceptions of the social climate of each company were measured. The second stage of the research tested six formulated hypotheses. The questionnaire monitored organizational conditions of the work environment, working relationships and cooperation, commanders' work behaviour, and job satisfaction. The first four hypotheses tested for differences in the means of each category. In all cases, at the 0.05 level of significance, there are statistically significant differences between the scores of the individual companies in the blocks and overall. Pairwise comparisons show the most frequent differences between the 3/71 companies and any of the 1/72, 2/72, or 3/72 companies.

For the first category of organizational work environment conditions, the largest differences were between 3/71 and 1/72 and between 3/71 and 3/72. For the second category of working relationships and cooperation, differences showed between 1/71 and 72-3, 3/71 and 1/72, 3/71 and 2/72, and 3/71 and 3/72. "EI's ability to manage and influence relationships consists of three components: self-awareness (self-perception), self-control, and empathy" (Jancik, 2020, p. 29). This ability lies in the art of handling the emotions of others. Relationship management also lies in authenticity, trustworthiness and honesty. If a leader possesses this ability, he or she is able to create a positive social climate in the team.

Authors Jordan, Ashkanas & Härtel (2003) found that the ability to deal with others' emotions contributed significantly to self-monitoring and/or that by regulating and influencing other people's emotional reactions, role-dividers were able to enhance their own self-awareness skills.

For the category of commanders' work behaviour, the largest difference was found for 3/71 and 1/72. In the last category of job satisfaction, a significant difference was found for 3/71 and 2/72-3.

The findings for the fifth hypothesis, "There are statistically significant differences between the frequencies of responses to question 45 for each company," are as follows. The results showed that there is no statistical significance in the responses for individual companies. For Company 1/71, communication (74%), leadership style (68%), and interpersonal relationships (66%) were seen as most important, while working conditions (36%) were seen as least important. For Company 2/72, interpersonal relationships (71.1%), communication (57.9%) and (55.3%) leadership style were most frequently identified as important and working conditions (18.4%) were least frequently identified as important. For Company 3/71, interpersonal relationships were most frequently identified as important (75%), followed by leadership style (70%), communication (45%), and least frequently by working conditions (15%). Company 1/72 most frequently identified communication (72.5%), followed by interpersonal relationships (65%), leadership style (52.5%), and least frequently by working conditions (32.5%).

For company 2/72, leadership style (71.8%), followed by interpersonal relations (64.1%), communication (61.5%) and working conditions were the least frequently selected. For Company 3/72, leadership style (66.7%) was the most frequently chosen, followed by interpersonal relations (56.5%) and communication (46.6%), and working conditions (36.2%) the least.

Table 5: Table of frequencies and relative frequencies (%) of agreement with variants

Table of frequencies and relative frequencies (%) of agreement with variants							Table of frequencies and relative frequencies (%) of agreement with variants
Influence has	Company						
	1-71	2-71	3-71	1-72	2-72	3-72	
Communication	37	22	9	29	48	32	177
	74,0%	57,9%	45,0%	72,5%	61,5%	46,4%	60,0%
Style of leadership	34	21	14	21	56	46	192
	68,0%	55,3%	70,0%	52,5%	71,8%	66,7%	65,1%

Working condition	18	7	3	13	30	25	96
	36,0%	18,4%	15,0%	32,5%	38,5%	36,2%	32,5%
Interpersonal relationships	33	27	15	26	50	39	190
	66,0%	71,1%	75,0%	65,0%	64,1%	56,5%	64,4%

(own study)

It can be assumed from the results that interpersonal relationships, leadership style and communication matter most to the selected respondents. All these three aspects can be developed through the EI construct and strengthen these skills in the commander, thus affecting the social climate and job satisfaction in the company.

4. Conclusion

The article addresses direct leadership in the Army of the Czech Republic with a focus on the application of emotional intelligence and its connection to the social climate of units. The selection of these selected areas is based on a literature search of domestic and foreign sources. The results of conducted research have shown the importance of strengthening emotional intelligence in the army, and open for searching ways how to include the development of emotional intelligence in the educational army system.

In accordance with the aim of the paper, a draft methodology for commanders of direct leadership in the Czech Armed Forces and other recommendations were presented. The main objective of the methodology is to increase the level of the individual components of emotional intelligence (perception of emotions, use of emotions, understanding emotions and emotion management) of the participants and to develop the ability to apply them in practice in command positions in the ACR.

In the presented methodology, the profile of the participant and the profile of the graduate of the training event is defined. Individuals who serve in the ground forces command of the mechanized brigade of the Army of the Czech Republic may participate. The prerequisite is the completion of secondary education with a high school diploma. Graduates will have developed the various components of emotional intelligence and will be able to apply them to their command practice.

The methodology will be implemented under the auspices of the University of Defence, where the course will be included in educational activities. The duration is 5 teaching days, a total of 40 teaching hours according to the timetable of each study module. The methodology includes five study modules, namely "theoretical foundations of emotional intelligence, perception of emotions, use of emotions, understanding emotions, management of emotions". The developed curriculum defines the module title, structure, reading list and the way of module completion.

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