

## **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS INSTRUCTION: CONTENT ANALYSIS OF INTRODUCTORY TEXTBOOKS AND CODES OF ETHICS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the ethics chapters in five introduction-to-public relations textbooks and the codes of ethics of four major public relations associations contained within those chapters to assess the prevalence of language that either uses the same terms Daniel Goleman employs for his 25 competencies of emotional intelligence or uses words that strongly suggest the terms Goleman employs to determine the connection between the language of emotional intelligence and the language of the ethical practice of public relations. Results show that such a connection exists, with the emotional intelligence competency of trustworthiness being the most prevalent.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Though Bar-On (2004) contends that Charles Darwin in his 1872 work *Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* was the first to see the value of healthy intra- and interpersonal skills, Goleman's seminal work on emotional intelligence (1995) is generally seen as having dramatically altered the discussion as to what portends success. The notion that what had broadly been known as "people skills" could be put on the same playing field as critical thinking, erudition, language skills, and other traditional measures of intelligence was novel to say the least. Yet the concept has had great appeal, not only in psychology (Cox, 2008; Murphy, 2009; Singh & Woods, 2008) and sociology (Donohoe & Greene 2009), but with researchers in fields as diverse as medicine (Carr, 2009; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Stratton, Saunders, & Elam, 2007), education (Deniz, Tras, & Avdogan, 2009; Howard, 2009; Moore, 2009; Rietti, 2008), sports (Lane et al., 2009), marketing (Kidwell, Hardesty, & Childers 2008), human resources (Deutschendorf, 2009), speech pathology (Robertson, 2007), workplace satisfaction (Dong & Howard, 2006), and management (Parthasarathy, 2009; Schoo, 2008).

Though public relations, with its emphasis on relationship-building, may seem a natural fount for research into emotional intelligence, this wellspring has remained virtually untapped. Emotional intelligence is a source of effective public relations in the everyday experience of working professionals, and, for the purposes of this study, the 25 competencies of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2006, pp. 26-27) are integral to an understanding of the codes of ethics of the Arthur W. Page Society, the International Association of Business Communicators, the International Public Relations Association, and the Public Relations Society of America; and are consistent

with the material presented in the ethics chapters of five introductory public relations textbooks (Cameron, Wilcox, Reber, & Shin, 2008; Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006; Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, & Toth, 2009; Newsom, Turk, and Kruckeberg, 2000; and Seitel, 2007).

Especially in crisis situations (Seitel, 2007, pp. 39-42; Wilcox, Cameron, Ault, & Agee, 2007, pp. 260-267), organizations have found that the same principles of honesty, integrity, openness, trust, respect, and empathy that make for healthy personal relationships also result in sound, long-term relationships between an organization and its various publics. Perhaps the most frequently lauded crisis-management situation is the 1982 Tylenol murders (Seitel, 2007, pp. 39-42). Johnson & Johnson Company responded quickly to the fatal tampering, giving the media full access to information and doing everything possible to inform and protect consumers. The company acted with honesty, integrity, openness, trust, respect, and empathy.

In order to foster those competencies in others, one must first be fully aware and in control of one's internal emotional environment (Goleman, 2006, pp. 49-129). Emotional intelligence, like no other concept, brings the interpersonal and intrapersonal into play, seeing them as equally important in nurturing and maintaining positive relationships with others.

Heath and Coombs (2006) in a discussion of proactivity present eight principles of effective public relations that are all directly related to competencies of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2006, pp. 26-27):

- Be community oriented;
- Seek to put the best available information into play;
- Carefully analyze information that is in-play and invite analysis of information;
- Express evaluations, listen to others' evaluations, and invite evaluations—genuine dialogue;
- Seek outcomes that feature “win-win” alternatives;
- Be open, candid, and honest;
- Listen, give regard, and respond in ways that demonstrate a commitment not merely to defending a position but also to fostering dialogue that can lead all interested parties to achieve a mutually satisfying, beneficial outcome; and
- Seek to establish mutually beneficial relationships (p. 378).

Community orientation speaks to the competency of service orientation, while the second principle entails the competencies of trustworthiness, conscientiousness, and communication, and the third adds the competency of collaboration and cooperation. Genuine dialogue entails the competencies of understanding others, communication, and trustworthiness, and possibly developing others, leveraging diversity, political awareness, and building bonds. Orchestrating win-win outcomes calls upon the competencies of influence, leadership, and perhaps conflict management and change catalyst. Openness, candor, and honesty are aspects of the competency of trustworthiness, while true listening and genuine regard for others are subsumed under the competencies of understanding others, developing others, and building bonds. Finally, the establishment of mutually beneficial relationships entails all of the above in addition to emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment, self-confidence, self-control, adaptability, innovation, commitment, initiative, optimism, and team capabilities. The ethical practice of public relations is inherently linked to the competencies of emotional intelligence.

## Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the ethics chapters in five introduction-to-public relations textbooks and the codes of ethics of four major public relations associations contained within those chapters to determine the prevalence of language that either uses the same terms Goleman employs for the 25 competencies of emotional intelligence or uses words that strongly suggest the terms Goleman employs (see Table 1). Through such a content analysis of the ethics chapters in five introductory public relations texts, which include the codes of ethics of the Arthur W. Page Society, the International Association of Business Communicators, the International Public Relations Association, and the Public Relations Society of America, a strong relationship is sought between the 25 competencies of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995 & 2006) and the ethical instruction of public relations.

Thayer, Evans, McBride, Queen, and Spyridakis (2007) identify two levels of content analysis—manifest and latent. In the former, the researcher tallies “words, phrases, or other ‘surface’ features of the text itself” (p. 269). The latter involves interpreting the underlying meaning of the text. Latent analysis is the more difficult of the two levels of analysis because the researcher must have a clearly stated idea about what is being measured. For example, to measure the amount of chauvinist language in Hemingway’s novels, it is necessary to first define “chauvinist language.” That definition should ideally follow the work of other researchers who have already developed proven lists of chauvinist words and phrases (p. 270).

In this study, Goleman provides definitions of each of the 25 competencies (2006, pp. 26-27), which serve as guides for both the manifest and latent examples of each competency found in the texts. The competency of service orientation was somewhat expanded for the purposes of this study. Specifically, “customers” were taken to mean the general public, since, for the most part, specific customers were not cited in the texts and therefore any service to the community as a whole was considered a means of anticipating, recognizing, and meeting the needs of customers, potential or actual.

**TABLE 1. OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK: MANIFEST AND LATENT EXAMPLES OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE COMPETENCIES**

<p><b>Emotional Awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Goleman’s Definition: recognizing one’s emotions and their effects.</li><li>* Manifest: “deeply troubling questions for the individual practitioner” (Cameron, 208)</li><li>*Latent: “Open, two-way communications remains paramount—even in the face of frustration and failure.” (Cameron quoting Judith T. Phair, 213)</li></ul>
<p><b>Accurate Self-Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>*Goleman’s Definition: knowing one’s strengths and limits.</li><li>* Manifest: “Several studies have shown that the members of PRSA and other organizations have a much higher awareness of ethics and professional standards than nonmembers.” (Cameron, 208)</li><li>*Latent: “[E]thics in public relations really begins with the individual—and is directly related to his or her own value system as well as to the good of society.” (Cameron, 209)</li></ul>

**Self-Confidence**

- \* Goleman's Definition: a strong sense of one's self-worth and capabilities.
- \* Manifest: "[P]ractitioners must never allow a client or an employer to rob them of their self-esteem." (Cameron, 209)
- \* Latent: "We shouldn't allow ourselves to accept the lowest common denominator of behavior..." (Cutlip quoting Frank Wylie, 140)

**Self-Control**

- \* Goleman's Definition: keeping disruptive emotions and impulses in check.
- \* Manifest: "the right course of action based on moral principle, rather than cost, self-interest, or expedience" (Cutlip, 121)
- \* Latent: "Ethical professional practice requires placing public service and social responsibility over personal gains..." (Cutlip, 125)

**Trustworthiness**

- \* Goleman's Definition: maintaining standards of honesty and integrity.
- \* Manifest: "must have the will to be ethical, intending not to injure others, but rather to be honest and trustworthy" (Lattimore, 74)
- \* Latent: "Some practitioners have been arbitrarily fired for refusing to write news releases they thought would be false or misleading." (Lattimore, 75)

**Conscientiousness**

- \* Goleman's Definition: taking responsibility for personal performance.
- \* Manifest: "have the moral resolve to say yes or no" (Lattimore, 73)
- \* Latent: "When public relations practitioners participate in organizational decision, they bear a heavy ethical responsibility—not only to themselves and their organizations but also to their profession and the public." (Lattimore, 76)

**Adaptability**

- \* Goleman's Definition: flexibility in handling change.
- \* Manifest: "Always giving the majority preference prevents the organization from adapting to a change impetus initiated by publics and other stakeholders." (Cutlip, 120)
- \* Latent: Present all sides of an issue." (Cameron, 209)

**Innovation**

- \* Goleman's Definition: being comfortable with novel ideas, approaches, and new information.
- \* Manifest: "The most recent PRSA Code revisions...changed dramatically how PRSA intended to think about and educate public relations professionals about ethics." (Lattimore, 76)
- \* Latent: Yvon Chouinard, founder of Patagonia, "tithes 10 percent of pretax profits or one percent of sales to environmental groups. In 1996, Patagonia gave more than \$1.1 million to 200 groups....Internally, Chouinard looks for employees who have families, and half of his staff are women. For new mothers, Patagonia has lactation consultants, a nursing room and an on-site nursery next to the cafeteria, separated by a plate glass window." (Newsom, 225)

**Achievement Drive**

- \* Goleman's Definition: striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence.
- \* Manifest: "We must aspire to a better level of ethics, and we must persevere to achieve that goal." (Cutlip quoting Frank Wylie, 140)
- \* Latent: "Don't hesitate to stand up and rectify things immediately." (Lattimore, 75)

**Commitment**

- \* Goleman's Definition: aligning with the goals of the group or organization.
- \* Manifest: PRSA invested \$100,000 in "revamping its code of ethics." (Seitel, 109)
- \* Latent: "a commonly accepted sense of professional conduct that is translated into formal codes of ethics" (Seitel, 111)

**Initiative**

- \* Goleman's Definition: readiness to act on opportunities.
- \* Manifest: "Often the public relations professional will be the only member of management with the nerve to pose [ethical questions]....Sometimes this means saying no to what the boss wants to do. Public relations professionals must be driven by one purpose—to preserve, defend, sustain, and enhance the health and vitality of the organization." (Seitel, 112)
- \* Latent: "having the courage to stand up for ethical codes" (Newsom, 220)

**Optimism**

- \* Goleman's Definition: persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks.
- \* Manifest: "[W]hen everyone in the room—lawyer, human resources, treasurer, and president—all agree with the CEO's rock-headed scheme to disguise bad news, it is the public relations professional's duty to strike an independent tone." (Seitel, 122)
- \* Latent: [W]hen a rude and obnoxious journalist demands information, a practitioner's responsibility is to treat even the most obnoxious reporter with fairness." (Seitel, 122)

**Understanding Others**

- \* Goleman's Definition: sensing others' feelings and perspectives, and taking an active interest in their concerns.
- \* Manifest: "We build understanding, credibility, and relationships among a wide array of institutions and audiences." (Seitel, 110)
- \* Latent: What "can occur is that an organization should try to act in such a way that even when its actions negatively affect one or more [of] its publics (such as through the closing of an unprofitable facility), those who are affected will understand and accept the decision, even if they don't like it." (Newsom, 222)

**Developing Others**

- \* Goleman's Definition: sensing others' development needs and bolstering their abilities.
- \* Manifest: "Public relations' benefits are apparent in the billions of dollars raised to construct buildings, endow professorships, and provide scholarships in universities; [and] in campaigns to eradicate disease and substance abuse, reduce poverty, improve nutrition, house the homeless..." (Cutlip, 124)
- \* Latent: "At least one session at the association's annual conference is devoted to ethics. The international headquarters of IABC...encourages and supports efforts by IABC student chapters, professional chapters, and districts/regions to conduct meetings and workshops devoted to the topic of ethics and the IABC Code." (Lattimore, 81)

**Service Orientation**

- \* Goleman's Definition: anticipating, recognizing, and meeting customers' needs.
- \* Manifest: "We serve the public interest by acting as responsible advocates for those we represent." (Seitel, 110)
- \* Latent: "Today, many corporate executives realize that just as an individual has certain responsibilities as a citizen, so, too, does a corporate citizen have responsibilities to the society in which it is privileged to operate." (Seitel, 114)

**Leveraging Diversity**

- \* Goleman's Definition: cultivating opportunities through different kinds of people.
- \* Manifest: "Professional communicators are sensitive to cultural values and beliefs and engage in fair and balanced communication activities that foster and encourage mutual understanding." (Lattimore, 80)
- \* Latent: The IABC Code focuses on "the worth of human beings in the many cultures of the world" and is "sensitive to other cultural values and beliefs." (Lattimore, 79)

**Political Awareness**

- \* Goleman's Definition: reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships.
- \* Manifest: "consistently allows the minority to have just as much impact on an issue as the majority: an important consideration for activist groups and demographic minorities alike" (Cutlip, 121)
- \* Latent: "The fate of the yes-man is as inevitable as it is painful. Although your boss may think you're the greatest guy in the world for a while, you're going to lose your internal credibility because you never really state your professional opinions. And you're talking to a person who dotes on strong opinions and does not think highly of people who fail to offer them." (Cameron quoting J. Kenneth Clark, 209)

**Influence**

- \* Goleman's Definition: wielding effective tactics for persuasion.
- \* Manifest: "PR does work to change people's views..." (Newsom, 225)
- \* Latent: "Conduct public relations as if the whole company depended on it. It does. Corporate relations is a management function. No corporate strategy should be implemented without considering its external and internal public relations impact. The PR practitioner is a policy maker, not just a publicist." (Newsom, 224)

**Communication**

- \* Goleman's Definition: listening openly and sending convincing messages.
- \* Manifest: An "ongoing dialogue in the public sphere is necessary to reach consensus so that the actions of an organization gain legitimacy." (Newsom, 222)
- \* Latent: "We provide a voice in the marketplace of ideas, facts, and viewpoints to aid informed public debate." (Lattimore, 77)

**Conflict Management**

- \* Goleman's Definition: negotiating and resolving disagreements.
- \* Manifest: "Avoid real, potential, or perceived conflicts of interests among clients, employers, and the public. A public relations firm should inform a prospective client that it already represents a competitor or has a conflicting interest. A firm, for example should not be doing public relations for two competing fast-food restaurant chains." (Cameron, 206)
- \* Latent: "Building good relations with press [in China] is one way to head off potential lawsuits." (Cameron, 212)

**Leadership**

- \* Goleman's Definition: inspiring and guiding individuals and groups.
- \* Manifest: "highly principled employers" (Cameron, 208)
- \* Latent: "Most national organizations place heavy emphasis on educating their members on professional standards..." (Cameron, 205)

**Change Catalyst**

- \* Goleman's Definition: initiating or managing change.
- \* Manifest: The "organization's public relations efforts can change the beliefs, attitudes, opinions and even behaviors of publics." (Newsom, 222)
- \* Latent: "The most recent PRSA Code revisions...changed dramatically how PRSA intended to think about and educate public relations professionals about ethics." (Lattimore, 79)

**Building Bonds**

- \* Goleman's Definition: nurturing instrumental relationships.
- \* Manifest: "To facilitate dialogue, promote understanding and build mutually beneficial relationships are admirable—even noble—pursuits." (Cutlip, 119)
- \* Latent: "Public relations' benefits are apparent in...the lessening of ethnic, racial, and religious discrimination and conflict..." (Cutlip, 124)

**Collaboration and Cooperation**

- \* Goleman's Definition: working with others toward shared goals.
- \* Manifest: "collaboration, working jointly with different people, and allowing for both listening and give-and-take" (Seitel, 121)
- \* Latent: "Because the local community often provides critical elements such as utilities, tax breaks, cooperative zoning plans and chamber of commerce promotion, a community has a right to expect environmental protection, a fair tax return, employment of local people and corporate contributions of funds and executive time to community projects." (Newsom, 226)

**Team Capabilities**

- \* Goleman's Definition: creating group synergy in pursuing collective goals.
  - \* Manifest: "An employee of an organization should not share information with a public relations firm that is in competition with other firms for the organization's business." (Cameron, 206)
  - \* Latent: "[A]nything less than total honesty [with the media] will destroy credibility and with it, the practitioner's usefulness to an employer." (Cameron, 209)
- (Competencies are arranged in the order in which they are presented in Goleman (2006), not alphabetically.)

**Importance of Study**

Since this exploratory study is designed to establish a clear link between the competencies of emotional intelligence and the ethical codes of the three major public relations professional organizations, and between these competencies and the language used in the ethics chapters of five textbooks, the way is paved for further study into the intra- and interpersonal dynamics of the practice of public relations. The effective practice of public relations already employs Goleman's 25 competencies of emotional intelligence. Indeed, if a company wished to hire a public relations professional who would ethically and efficiently serve the needs of the company and its publics, the best way to ferret out such a person from a plethora of job candidates would be to look for someone with these competencies. Though the field of public relations has been intuitively employing Goleman's competencies, it is the purpose of this study to make a clear connection between Goleman's competencies of emotional intelligence and the use of these competencies in the instruction of and practice of public relations.

## Research Question

This study is designed to answer the following question: What is the relationship between the instruction of public relations, given the language employed in the ethics chapters of five introductory public relations textbooks and the codes of ethics of the Arthur W. Page Society, the International Association of Business Communicators, the International Public Relations Association and the Public Relations Society of America as presented in these texts on the one hand, and Goleman's 25 competencies of emotional intelligence on the other?

## Definitions

At least three of the terms germane to this paper—emotional intelligence, ethics, and public relations—have meant many things to many people. It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the myriad definitions that have been assigned to these terms over the years. The definitions given below do not, nor do they intend to, encompass the full, rich diversity of meanings given these words, but only to arrive at working definitions for the purposes of this study.

**Code of ethics:** A set of principles that all members of an organization, an institution, a company, or a profession swear to uphold. For the most part, codes of ethics have little or no enforcement provisions. To be in good standing, a member is supposed to adhere to the code's principles, but if he or she does not, he or she may not suffer any consequences (Wilcox et. al, 2007, p. 81).

**Emotional competencies:** According to Goleman (2006, p. 24), "An emotional competence is a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work." Goleman (2006, p. 16) also provides the following definition: "a personal trait or set of habits that leads to more effective or superior job performance—in other words, an ability that adds clear economic value to the efforts of a person on the job."

**Emotional intelligence:** Much has been written about emotional intelligence, but in brief, it refers to those intra- and interpersonal skills (Goleman's 25 competencies) that make for a successful career and personal life (Goleman, 2006, pp. 26-27).

**Ethics:** Though "morality" and "ethics" are often used interchangeably, the two actually concern different areas of social conduct. The former is primarily concerned with behavior that either adheres to or is in opposition to spiritual or religious teachings, whereas the latter concerns standards of behavior set by a profession, an organization, or an individual (Lattimore et. al, 2009, p. 74). Ethics concerns what is good and bad, fair and unfair, professional and unprofessional, proper and improper behavior for an individual, a profession, a company, or an organization.

**Public relations:** If ever there was a term that means wildly different things to different people, "public relations" is it. Public relations practitioners are often thought of as flacks and spin doctors; as such, public relations is the purview of those who "know how to lie and twist or spin issues during press conferences and other public forums to take the heat off of the organizations they represent" (Heath & Coombs, 2006, p. 7). Granted, such unscrupulous people are found in public relations, but they do not define the field. Rather, public relations is "the management

function that entails planning, research, publicity, promotion, and collaborative decision making to help any organization's ability to listen to, appreciate, and respond appropriately to those persons and groups whose mutually beneficial relationships the organization needs to foster as it strives to achieve its mission and vision" (Heath & Coombs, 2006, p. 7). Cutlip, Center, and Broom (2006, p. 5) offer a more succinct definition, which served the purposes of this study: "the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends."

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A search of academic databases, such as JURN, specializing in the arts and humanities, and PsychINFO, the largest database for peer-reviewed articles in behavioral sciences and mental health, yielded no journal articles that specifically address the role of emotional intelligence in the practice of or instruction of public relations. This is surprising on three counts: (1) sixteen years have elapsed since the publication of Goleman's groundbreaking work on emotional intelligence (1995); (2) the effective practice of public relations and the core of emotional intelligence are both relationship-centered; and (3) many hundreds of articles on emotional intelligence have been published, including in the related fields of marketing and consumer behavior (Kidwell, Hardesty, & Childers 2008).

Goleman (2006, pp. 26-27) presents three areas of personal competence and two areas of social competence that comprise EI: self-awareness ("knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources, and intuitions"), self-regulation ("managing one's internal states, impulses, and resources"), motivation ("emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals"), empathy ("awareness of others' feelings, needs, and concerns"), and social skills ("adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others"). These five areas are then divided into 25 competencies: emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment, self-confidence, self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, innovation, achievement drive, commitment, initiative, optimism, understanding others, developing others, service orientation, leveraging diversity, political awareness, influence, communications, conflict management, leadership, change catalyst, building bonds, collaboration and cooperation, and team capabilities (pp. 26-27). All these competencies are seen in the ethical practice of public relations and in the instruction of the same. Certainly any accomplished professor must be emotionally aware, a good judge of him/herself, self-confident, not prone to emotional outbursts or other inappropriate emotional responses, trustworthy, conscientious in preparing lessons and in grading, flexible enough to adapt his or her lesson plans to meet student needs, innovative in teaching methods, focused on achieving a high level of student comprehension, committed to the subject at hand, a self-starter, optimistic, understanding of the needs of his/her students, interested in developing the talents of his/her students, dedicated to serving students to the best of his/her ability, able to make the most of a diverse group of students, politically aware of a classroom's shifting dynamics and power plays, influential in shaping young minds, able to communicate theories and practices to students who have different learning styles, able to prevent and to quickly resolve conflicts, a leader whom the students admire and respect, a catalyst for change in his/her students' thinking, a person who builds lasting bonds among students and between students and him/herself, a facilitator of collaborative and cooperative projects, and a promoter for team spirit. Because these competencies so aptly convey the mark of a good teacher and especially a good public

relations educator, the bulk of this paper addresses the role of EI in the instruction of public relations, realizing that the same skill set also serves the public relations practitioner. After all, the public relations educator is selling ideas to his or her students, convincing them that learning is desirable and that the profession of public relations is a worthwhile endeavor, while the public relations professional is selling his or her clients and the public on an image of an organization.

### **Project Management as a Model for the Use of Emotional Intelligence in Public Relations**

Though no published works in the researcher's review of the literature have established EI as integral to the practice of public relations, there exist models that have been employed in other disciplines that can be applied to public relations and the instruction of public relations courses. The researcher has chosen the field of project management, as both the public relations practitioner and the public relations professor can be viewed as project managers, individuals who must be adept on at least three fronts that are also integral to effective project management: (1) seeing the big picture and having one's sights set on the final outcome; (2) attending to the myriad details that ensure the success of the project, program, campaign, or class; and (3) effective leadership skills to make sure that tasks are completed in a timely and competent manner.

As an additional similarity between project management and public relations, Mersino (2007) points out that, while researching his book *Emotional Intelligence for Project Managers*, he also found a dearth of previously published material linking EI with his field:

The February 2006 issue of *PM Network* ran a cover story on emotional intelligence. It was interesting that this article appeared eleven years after Daniel Goleman's first book was published. When I began researching this book I found that there had been a previous *PM Network* [article] on emotional intelligence featuring Daniel Goleman in 1999. Other than these two examples and a few others, I have not found many people looking at the linkage between emotional intelligence and success in project management (p.12).

Mersino (2007) contends that high levels of emotional intelligence in project managers can help them to: (1) develop stakeholder relationships that support the project's success; (2) anticipate and avoid emotional breakdowns; (3) deal with difficult team members and manage conflict; (4) leverage emotional information to make better decisions; (5) communicate more effectively; (6) create a positive work environment and high team morale; and (7) cast a vision for shared project objectives that will attract, inspire, and motivate the project team (p. 12). These seven benefits, with slight modification, are directly applicable to both the practice of public relations and the successful instruction of public relations courses: (1) develop stakeholder (client, shareholder, employee, community) relationships that support the campaign's success/develop student-student and student-teacher relationships that support the class's success; (2) anticipate and avoid emotional breakdowns with stakeholders/students; (3) deal with difficult clients/students and manage conflict; (4) leverage emotional information to make better decisions vis-à-vis clients/students; (5) communicate more effectively with clients/students; (6) create a positive

work/classroom environment and high team/student morale; and (7) cast a vision for shared campaign/course objectives that will attract, inspire, and motivate the team/the students.

Mersino (2007, p. 13) writes, “Relationships are the key to success as a PM.” This is just as true for the practice of public relations. It has long been the researcher’s experience, both as a public relations practitioner and as a public relations professor, that the field should be renamed public relationships, since “relations” connotes a static environment, whereas relationships are dynamic and ever-changing. Also, the word “relationships” addresses what the researcher contends is the heart of ethical, effective public relations—the long-term best interests of all parties involved, not the short-term gains of a particular client or the success of a particular project. Relationships are the building blocks of EI—both the relationship of self to one’s own emotions and the relationship of self to others and the emotions of others. Truly, the highest form of public relations is the same as a high level of emotional intelligence.

### **Emotional Intelligence as an Indicator of Success in Business**

Cherniss (2010) summarizes 19 studies that show dramatic results when those employees with high emotional intelligence are compared with those of average or below-average EI. The researcher has selected the following studies as they are especially noteworthy:

\* The U.S. Air Force used EI measures to select recruiters, increasing its “ability to predict successful recruiters by nearly three-fold” for a savings of \$3 million annually.

\* Seasoned partners in a multinational consulting firm “who scored above the median on 9 or more” of 20 EI competencies “delivered \$1.2 million more profit from their accounts than did other partners,” a 139 percent gain.

\* In jobs of medium complexity such as sales clerks and mechanics, top performers are 12 times more productive than those at the bottom and 85 percent more productive than average performers. In more complex jobs such as account managers and insurance agents, top performers are 127 percent more productive than average performers. “Competency research in over 200 companies and organizations worldwide suggests that about one-third of this difference is due to technical skill and cognitive ability while two-thirds is due to emotional competence....In top leadership positions, over four-fifths of the differences is due to emotional competence.”

\* At L’Oreal, the high-end cosmetics firm, sales agents selected on the basis of emotional competencies outsold salespeople selected using the company’s conventional selection procedure by an average of \$91,370. The former also had 63 percent less turnover during the first year.

\* At a major beverage firm, 50 percent of division presidents hired using standard methods left the company within two years, whereas only 6 percent of those hired on the basis of EI competencies did the same.

\* Following EI training of supervisors at a manufacturing plant, “lost-time accidents were reduced by 50 percent, formal grievances were reduced from an average of 15 per year to 3 per year, and the plant exceeded productivity goals by \$250,000.”

\* “For sales reps at a computer company, those hired based on their emotional competence were 90 percent more likely to finish their training than those hired on other criteria.”

\* “For 515 senior executives analyzed by the search firm Egon Zehnder International, those who were primarily strong in emotional intelligence were more likely to succeed than those who were strongest in either relevant previous experience or IQ....[E]motional intelligence was a better predictor of success than either relevant previous experience or high IQ. “ Specifically, executives scoring high in EI were responsible for 74 percent of successes but only 24 percent of failures.”

As can be seen from the above examples and from others cited by Cherniss (2010), emotional intelligence has been linked to success in a wide variety of professions and industries—from military recruiting to cosmetic sales.

### **Emotional Intelligence in Education**

The emotional intelligence of college students, measured by their empathy scores, is lower than their counterparts of two or three decades ago, according to a study by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research (Bryner, 2010). The findings are based on a review of 72 studies of 14,000 American college students conducted between 1979 and 2009. These troubling findings point to the pressing need for EI education from early childhood on. Before students can be taught how to use their emotional intelligence to cope with the pressures of academia, however, those doing the teaching must be trained in the use of their own emotional intelligence. As Palomera, Fernandez-Berrocal, and Brackett (2008) write, “emotional competence of teachers is necessary, both in general for their own well-being and for effectiveness and quality in carrying out teaching-learning processes in the classroom, and in particular for the socio-emotional development of students.”

As Howard (2009) notes in his study of the relationship between emotional intelligence and communication apprehension:

Educators with high emotional intelligence are by definition those who foster a comfortable learning environment, a setting in which all students are encouraged to participate freely without fear of criticism or derision. Such a setting fosters mutual trust, and people who trust each other are more comfortable in expressing their feelings, insights, and ideas with one another than are those who do not trust each other. (p. 414).

Palomera, Fernandez-Berrocal, and Brackett (2008) envision the teacher of tomorrow—who is actually needed today—who is not only competent in her field but has the intra- and interpersonal skills to cope with the pressures of the job and to create a learning environment in which students are comfortable and feel respected and valued: “...today’s teacher should be able to demonstrate: good intellectual, moral, emotional and social development and be able to

promote the same among a diverse student body, in addition to knowing how to work with the entire educational community, how to investigate within their own setting, and provide proper school management.” For this tall order, nothing short of professionals with high emotional intelligence is required.

### **Emotional Intelligence in Public Relations Instruction**

A search for curricula that specifically address emotional intelligence in public relations yielded no results. The closest matches were an online course in emotional intelligence taught by Jodell Raymond (2010), who has experience in public relations, sales, marketing, and written communications, and an article on the value of EI during crises in the Public Relations Society of America’s journal (Loomis, 2007), given that part of PRSA’s mission is to educate its members as to developments in the field. This dearth of findings again speaks to the need for this study. Though much has been written over the years about emotional intelligence and even about its use in the classroom, nothing prior to this paper has yet been penned about the value of EI in public relations instruction.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Each instance of a specific use of the same term Goleman uses and each instance of a word or group of words that strongly suggests one of his EI competencies was tallied. Some language does not fall neatly into one discreet EI competency but rather is suggestive of more than one. When this was the case, the researcher’s subjective evaluation came into play, making for a somewhat hybrid qualitative-quantitative approach to the entire study, rather than a purely quantitative approach that would have been the case if the researcher only coded one-to-one correspondences between EI competencies and the terms used in the textbooks and in the codes. Textbooks were selected using the following criteria: (1) last published within the past ten years, with most texts published within the past three years; (2) staying power, i.e., the number of editions, the most being 10 (Seitel, 2007); (3) diversity of writers, i.e., writers from around the country and of different backgrounds and institutions; and (4) the researcher’s familiarity with the textbooks and the researcher’s use of the textbooks in classroom instruction.

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

This is the first research effort to examine the inclusion of emotional intelligence in courses that provide students with an introduction to the field of public relations. This study assumed that material presented in the textbooks and in the codes of ethics represent the ethical code of public relations professionals and educators. That is, since the ethical principles espoused in the textbooks and codes of ethics are presented as the standards all public relations professionals strive to uphold, the researcher has assumed that they are in fact the standards that public relations professionals strive to uphold. In particular, since these codes are discussed in introduction-to-public relations classes and since the textbooks are required reading for those classes for which they are assigned, it is assumed that these ethical standards are imparted to students.

A limitation of this study is the number of textbooks employed. Many public relations textbooks could have been evaluated, but time did not permit this. Rather, a sample of some of the most commonly used textbooks was evaluated. Since this is a first effort, there are no prior research results to affirm or refute or extend the results obtained in this study. This means that the results can conservatively be used to make generalizations only about the textbooks and the codes of ethics that were examined. Although it is possible to ground generalizations about the nature of the courses in which these textbooks were used, such generalizations need to be viewed as tentative at best. The selection of textbooks indicates the focus of the course but not as much as would data gathered from observing how the course was taught, the assignments used, and the nature of the supplemental readings assigned by the course educator. The textbooks that were selected are assumed to be widely used; however, this assumption is based on the assertions of the textbook publishers and was not independently verified. The findings of this study conservatively should be used to make inferences about the textbooks that were examined. The findings do provide a foundation and a viable content analysis coding scheme for examination of other textbooks that compete with those selected for this study. As this is the first known study of emotional intelligence and the instruction of public relations and as this topic warrants more study, much work can be undertaken in the future.

## **RESULTS**

Of the 25 competencies of emotional intelligence that were tallied in the ethics chapters of the five textbooks, trustworthiness is the clear front runner with 183 instances (see Table 2). In second place is conscientiousness with 147 instances, followed by service orientation with 114 and communication with 105. The link between trustworthiness and conscientiousness is to be expected, since trustworthiness is defined as “maintaining standards of honesty and integrity” and a person of integrity would necessarily take “responsibility for personal performance,” the definition of conscientiousness (Goleman, 2006, p.26).

Competencies that received low scores, specifically, adaptability (5) and innovation (9) are not *prima facie* ethical characteristics, and so it is little wonder that they do not figure prominently in ethics chapters. It is possible that they are discussed in more depth in other chapters of introductory texts, say, chapters that deal with publicity campaigns or product redesigns or company makeovers. That is, just because they did not figure prominently in this study does not mean that they are not key competencies in an emotionally intelligent public relations practitioner’s toolbox. This warrants future study. This said, in general, for those competencies that are usually associated with ethical behavior, results indicate a strong relationship between the texts and Goleman’s competencies.

**TABLE 2. CODING RESULTS IN TABULAR FORMAT**

	Cameron	Cutlip	Lattimore	Newsom	Seitel	Total
Emotional Awareness	6	0	0	1	2	9
Accurate self-assessment	7	3	16	10	3	39
Self-confidence	12	4	6	5	6	33
Self-control	5	15	12	2	12	46
Trustworthiness	45	27	50	21	40	183
Conscientiousness	27	40	45	9	26	147
Adaptability	1	1	0	0	3	5
Innovation	3	1	1	2	2	9
Achievement drive	2	9	1	0	10	22
Commitment	6	29	7	4	11	57
Initiative	6	3	3	2	4	18
Optimism	0	10	0	2	5	17
Understanding others	6	20	9	8	3	46
Developing others	9	11	5	4	3	32
Service orientation	18	43	21	11	21	114
Leveraging diversity	3	11	4	0	4	22
Political awareness	9	2	4	5	2	22
Influence	23	19	9	6	9	66
Communication	33	14	32	18	8	105
Conflict management	9	13	6	8	10	46
Leadership	13	22	9	5	9	58
Change catalyst	8	13	2	7	4	34
Building bonds	11	4	8	5	1	29
Collaboration & cooperation	6	15	7	3	5	36
Team capabilities	5	15	10	1	3	34

Cameron = Cameron, G.T., Wilcox, D.L., Reber, B.H., and Shin, J.H. (2008). *Public Relations Today: Managing Competition and Conflict*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Cutlip = Cutlip, S.M., Center, A.H., and Broom, G.M. (2006). *Effective Public Relations*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

Lattimore = Lattimore, D., Baskin, O., Heiman, S. T., & Toth, E.L. (2009). *Public Relations: The Profession and the Practice*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Newsom = Newsom, D., Turk, J.V.S., & Kruckeberg, D. (2000). *This is PR: Realities of Public Relations*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Seitel = Seitel, F.P. (2007). *The Practice of Public Relations* (10<sup>th</sup> edition). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

## DISCUSSION

According to the Edelman Trust Barometer, a survey taken in 2009 of 4,875 college-educated consumers in 22 countries (Weisul, 2010), only 38 percent of U.S. respondents said they trusted

business to do what is right. Given the near-destruction of the global economy by unscrupulous bankers and by the job losses, home foreclosures, and general malaise that resulted from these practices, it is little wonder that Americans' trust in the banking system has plummeted to 29 percent (Weisul, 2010). CEOs "came in dead last in a ranking of credible spokespeople" (Weisul, 2010).

The above crisis in trust points to poor emotional intelligence skills, specifically, accurate self-assessment, self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, commitment, understanding others, developing others, service orientation, political awareness, communication, conflict management, leadership, building bonds, and collaboration and cooperation (Goleman, 2006). Richard Edelman, president and CEO of the public relations firm Edelman, which commissions the Edelman Trust Barometer, said, CEOs need to be "genuine, spontaneous, and talk about things beyond the numbers. They need to be talking not just to elites but to customers and employees" and "do a better job talking about what employees want to hear about, which is pay and benefits" (Weisul, 2010). Edelman's comments are another way of saying CEOs need to beef-up their EI skills of trustworthiness, understanding others, developing others, political awareness, influence, communication, leadership, building bonds, collaboration and cooperation, and team capabilities. Clearly, big business and especially financial institutions have a serious image problem. But public relations practitioners must not fail to realize that it is far more than this. If public relations is always seen as maintaining a good face to the public, its activities are mere window-dressing. Public discontent does not arise from nowhere; there are concrete reasons grounded in reality that are disturbing to the public. It is not enough for bankers, for example, to say that they care and that they're honest and trustworthy; they must really care and must truly be people of integrity or the public will continue to find them out of touch, self-absorbed, unconcerned about the common man, and suspect.

Emotional intelligence picks up where image-building leaves off. Image-building is about convincing the public that a corporation is acting in an eco-friendly, socially conscious, or financially prudent manner, even if it isn't. But emotional intelligence is about actually being a friend to the environment, to society, and to workers. Emotional intelligence goes beyond two-way communication in that it adds both an intrapersonal level and an emotive and empathic understanding. Emotional intelligence operates in an environment of an emotionally healthy practitioner and an emotionally healthy relationship between the practitioner (and the organization he or she represents) and the appropriate publics. This dynamic is more than simply listening to the various publics for the concerns they voice; it also entails understanding the emotional climate in which these concerns and criticisms arise. Understanding of others, after all, has been sorely lacking in the lavish displays of wealth and privilege paraded in front of millions of Americans who are unable to put food on their tables and roofs over their heads. In order to have ethical, emotionally intelligent practitioners of public relations in corporate and government arenas, it is first necessary to incorporate emotional intelligence into the instruction of public relations courses. What is learned in the classroom can then eventually be used in the field. This study is a first step in bridging the gaps between lessons learned in public relations courses, as evidenced in the language employed in the ethics chapters of introductory texts, and the ethical practice of public relations in our society.

## **A Fifth Tradition of Public Relations**

Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, and Toth (2009) present four traditions of public relations: rhetorician and press agent, journalistic and publicity, persuasive communication campaign, and relation building and two-way communication. The results of the content analysis presented here, as well as the low esteem in which the public holds business and government, beg for a new model for the practice of public relations. A fifth tradition of emotional intelligence that goes beyond two-way communication may be necessary. Further studies along the lines of this study could bear that out.

Emotional intelligence goes beyond two-way communication in that it adds both an intrapersonal level and an emotive and empathic understanding. Emotional intelligence operates in an environment of an emotionally healthy practitioner and an emotionally healthy relationship between the practitioner (and the organization he or she represents) and the appropriate publics. As Goleman (2006) relates, “Over and over, I heard what became a familiar litany. People like the high-performing business consultant with the low GPA told me they found emotional intelligence, not technical expertise or book learning, to be what mattered most for excellence” (p. 5). This dynamic is more than simply listening to the various publics for the information they may impart and the concerns they voice; it also entails understanding the emotional climate in which these concerns and criticisms arise. Understanding of others, after all, has been sorely lacking in the lavish displays of wealth and privilege paraded in front of millions of Americans who are unable to put food on their tables and roofs over their heads because of the greed and negligence of auto manufacturers, financial institutions, and the mortgage industry.

In order to have ethical, emotionally intelligent practitioners of public relations in corporate and government arenas, it is first necessary to incorporate emotional intelligence into the instruction of public relations courses. What is learned in the classroom can then eventually be used in the field. This study is a first step in bridging the gaps between lessons learned in public relations courses, as evidenced in the language employed in the ethics chapters of introductory texts and the ethical practice of public relations in our society.

## **Future Studies**

As an exploratory work in the new area of emotional intelligence in the instruction and practice of public relations, this study is but a beginning of what could prove to be a long career for this researcher and the material for many more studies by countless other researchers. This study alone could be performed again with multiple coders or with a computer-assisted program. Also, as stated in the results chapter, low-scoring competencies in the content analysis, such as adaptability and innovation, might be far more prevalent in chapters on campaigns, product launches, viral marketing, brand revamps, and crisis management, as these competencies are not *prima facie* ethical characteristics. This suggests the possibility of content analyses that deal with chapters other than those concentrating on ethics.

Questionnaires assessing students’, educators’, or practitioners’ emotional intelligence; qualitative workplace observations of practitioners in action; and content analyses of company

manuals and training videos to determine the role of emotional intelligence in the corporate setting are all possible studies that may proceed from this work.

The nature of this research project was essentially descriptive in nature, which is what a first research effort should be. This means that there are a number of directions that future research can take. In fact, future research is called for, as it is desirable to research this topic using a number of methodologies to determine if it is possible to affirm, reject, or extend what has been uncovered by this researcher's effort. What follows are but a few suggestions for future research. Because this research effort was limited to the ethics chapters of the five books, references to emotional in other chapters were not discovered or described. A more elaborate research effort should be undertaken that includes the coding of the content from all the chapters in these books. Such an effort would require that the contents be converted (scanned) into text files and coded with the assistance of a computer. This would require the identification of the content analysis software that was best suited for the task.

Since descriptions of the discipline and practice of public relations are not limited to textbooks intended for use by undergraduates, it seems desirable to look at the top-selling general circulation public relations titles. Online book retailers could be consulted to identify the most frequently purchased titles and then a computer-aided content analysis could be conducted to see if emotional intelligence themes are contained in these books. The profession of public relations has a number of publications intended for those who are currently practicing in the field. A review of the contents of these publications for the last several years should be undertaken to see if articles, advice pieces, and editorials make reference to themes associated with emotional intelligence.

The methodology of content analysis is not the only means of gathering data regarding the topic of EI. It seems desirable to survey those individuals who work in the profession of public relations to learn their feelings about EI. Focus groups could be used to learn what those in the field see as the needs of the profession as well as their expectations for the background of their new hires. Though this work is but a first step in what could prove to be an encompassing re-visioning of the instruction of and practice of public relations, it is the researcher's hope that future studies will work to establish emotional intelligence as the fifth tradition of public relations.

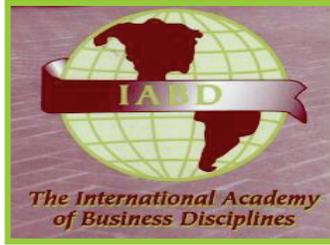
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