‘Would you like to talk about that?’ How and when group emotional awareness enhances effectiveness of gender diverse teams

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore the moderating role of group emotional awareness and diversity beliefs in the relationship between gender diversity and group effectiveness. In study 1 (cross-sectional survey in 31 organizational teams), the interaction effect between diversity and awareness suggests that awareness contributes to a larger extent to team effectiveness in gender homogenous rather than heterogeneous teams. Considering the moderating role of diversity beliefs for the outcomes of diversity, in study 2 (an experimental study on 21 student project teams) we look at the interaction of diversity beliefs and group emotional awareness. Results suggest that a positive framing of diversity has the strongest positive impact on effectiveness. However, group emotional awareness cancels the negative framing effect of diversity on effectiveness. Our data gives evidence for the existence of an affective, rather than cognitive path to reaping the benefits of gender diversity without paying the price elicited by categorization.

Keywords: Group emotional awareness, gender diversity, diversity beliefs

Résumé

Le but de cet article est d'explorer le rôle modérateur de la conscience émotionnelle de groupe et des croyances sur la diversité dans la relation entre la mixité des sexes et l'efficacité du groupe. Dans la première 'étude (une étude transversale dans 31 équipes), l'effet d'interaction entre la diversité et la sensibilisation suggère que la sensibilisation contribue plus à l'efficacité des l'équipes homogènes contre à celle des équipes hétérogènes. Considérant le rôle modérateur des croyances en matière de diversité pour les conséquences de la diversité, nous examinons dans la deuxième étude (une étude expérimentale sur 21 équipes de projets d'étudiants) l'interaction des croyances sur la diversité et la conscience émotionnelle du groupe. Les résultats suggèrent qu'un cadrage positif de la diversité a l' impact positif le plus fort sur l'efficacité. Par contre, la conscience émotionnelle de groupe annule l'effet de cadrage négatif de la diversité sur l'efficacité. Nos données prouvent l'existence d'une route affective, en plus de celle cognitive à récolter les bénéfices de la diversité des sexes sans en payer le prix donnée par la catégorisation.

Mots-clés: conscience émotionnelle de groupe, diversité de sexe, croyances sur la diversité

Rezumat

Scopul acestui articol este de a explora rolul moderator al conștientizării emoționale în grup și credințelor despre valoarea-în-diversitate în relația dintre de diversitatea de gen în grup și eficiența grupului. În Studiul 1 (studiu de teren transversal în 31 de echipe organizaționale), efectul de interacțiune dintre diversitate și conștientizarea emoțională sugerează că gradul de conștientizare emoțională în grup contribuie într-o măsură mai mare la eficacitatea echipei, mai degrabă în echipele omogene decât în cele eterogene în ceea ce privește genul. Având în vedere rolul moderator al credințelor în diversitate pentru eficacitatea grupurilor, în studiul 2 (un studiu experimental realizat cu 21 de echipe de proiect studențești), ne uităm la interacțiunea dintre convingerile despre valoarea-în-diversitate și conștientizarea emoțională în grup. Rezultatele sugerează că o viziune pozitivă despre diversitate are cel mai puternic impact pozitiv asupra eficacității echipelor eterogene. Cu toate acestea, conștientizarea emoțională în grup anulează efectul unor convingeri negative despre diversitate asupra eficacității. Datele noastre oferă dovezi pentru existența unei căi alternative afective, în vederea culegerii fructelor diversității de gen, fără a suferi consecințele negative ale proceselor de categorizare în aceste echipe.

Cuvinte cheie: Conștientizarea emoțională în grup, diversitate de gen, convingeri despre diversitate

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Introduction

What drives teams to success is as old a question as the mammoth hunt. When hominids formed the first interdependent, goal-oriented gathering, they set the scene for all the teamwork effectiveness puzzles that research still tries to disentangle. While most teamwork models (e.g. Hackman, 1987) recognize that task processes affect team effectiveness, recently the focus has shifted towards social capital as a core facilitator in the emergence of effective task processes and member engagement in them (Druskat & Kayes, 2000; Druskat & Wolff, 1999). Developing social capital requires group members to feel they are a trusted and integral part of the group (Druskat & Wolff, 1999), because working together implies not only cognitive, but largely affective processes and exchanges that take place between the group members. Collective emotions emerge from interpersonal interactions and shape group dynamics and effectiveness. Therefore, in order to build social capital, the group must tend both to individual members' needs and emotions and regulate these emotions (so as to induce desirable member behaviours and attitudes), as well as become aware of group-level emotion and regulate it (Druskat & Wolff, 1999).

This is especially important in nowadays organizations, where the overall diversity of teams introduces more complexity in interpersonal relations. Across a plethora of diversity studies (Brouwer & Boroș, 2010; Christian, Porter & Moffitt, 2006; Jehn & Bezrukova, 2004; Wang, Davidson, Yakushko, Bilestein Savoy, Tan, & Bleier, 2003), interpersonal understanding and perspective taking (the two core competencies related to group emotional awareness) have been emerging as core predictors of successfully managing diversity in teams and organizations. Group diversity is particularly important for the emotional dynamics of groups, as individual differences associated with group members' different backgrounds in diverse groups (e.g. gender differences) impact on the emotion expression and recognition.

However, the question that emerges in this context is what happens when emotional awareness points to a categorical difference in team diversity? For instance, we harbour stereotypes about cold or warm nations (Northern vs Latin cultures), stereotypes about women being more emotional while men being more rational. When the salient diversity (i.e. gender) entails stereotypes about emotionality, is it possible that an increased emotional awareness would hinder the task-related processes of the group and relocate more resources to dealing with these differences? The categorization-elaboration model (Van Knippenberg, De Dreu & Homan, 2004) contends that this resource reallocation would hinder performance, by reducing the time and resources the group has to focus on the task. However, group emotional awareness has repeatedly proved its facilitating role in team effectiveness (Druskat, Sala & Mount, 2006).

Considering these two competing views, we propose that group emotional awareness will have a more limited positive effect in heterogeneous teams compared to homogenous ones, because of the extra resources the groups needs to invest in creating explicit coordination strategies, instead of relying on implicit ones. Furthermore, in the second study we elaborate further on this mechanism and look more in-depth into the diversity concept, by focusing not only on diversity itself (as we do in Study 1), but on the diversity beliefs groups have and what role will group emotional awareness play for the group's performance, depending on these beliefs.

So what is group emotional awareness?...

Group emotional awareness is the ability of a team to generate a shared set of norms that shape how members perceive and understand their own emotions and those exhibited by other members and individuals outside of the team (Druskat & Druskat, 2006; Druskat & Wolff, 2001). Teams that foster emotional awareness report less conflict, increased cohesion and performance (Rapisarda, 2002). Appraising the various emotions occurring in the team and understanding their full meaning allows team members to recognize in time the downward emotional spirals of conflict and act to prevent their potential damage (Yang & Mossholder, 2004). Furthermore, when conflict occurs, these teams are more successful in comprehending the emotions arising from it (Ayoko, Callan & Härtel, 2008), and hence not giving way to the misattributions that lead to the escalation and transformation of conflict (Simons & Peterson, 2001).

In general, the existence of group norms that facilitate effective recognition and understanding of emotions are beneficial for performance

because they prevent the negative emotionality and process losses in groups (Curşeu, Boroş & Oerlemans, 2012). However, looking at group emotional awareness from the perspective of social categorization literature (Van Knippenberg, De Dreu & Homan, 2004), a different question is raised: how does group emotional awareness impact team performance in groups where emotional processing is a salient difference across members? Will group emotional awareness maintain its positive effects, and if so, under what conditions?

...and how does emotional awareness operate in gender diverse teams?

Previous research pointed towards both positive and negative implications of gender diversity both for team dynamics and effectiveness (Bowers, Pharmer & Salas, 2000; Curşeu, Schruijer and Boroş, 2007; Fenwick & Neal, 2001; Lee & Farh, 2004). However, the focus in diversity research has moved from a black or white approach to a quest for factors and conditions that can make diversity beneficial or detrimental. Most of these factors so far (e.g. reflexivity – West & Sacramento, 2006; diversity beliefs - van Dick, van Knippenberg, Hägele, Guillaume & Brodbeck, 2008), pertain to the cognitive realm. Recently though, a stream of research has started to also look at the affective dimension of team diversity, and capitalized on concepts such as psychological safety (Dollard & Bakker, 2010), trust (Fay, Borrill, Amir, Haward & West, 2006) and empathy (Pendry, Driscoll & Field, 2007). For gender diversity, emotional climate and processes are a core area of investigation, as previous research systematically points towards gender differences in emotional experience (Wegge, van Dick, Fisher, West & Dawson, 2006), as well as emotional expression, awareness and regulation (Ciarrochi, Caputi & Mayer, 2003). Furthermore, emotionality is one of the core dimensions of gender stereotyping, with women being considered more 'emotional' than men (Barrett & Bliss-Moreau, 2009).

Based on real or stereotypical gender differences in the processing of emotions, gender diverse teams cannot draw as easily on shared mental models regarding affective processes as homogenous teams can (Rico, Sanchez-Manzanares, Gil & Gibson, 2008). Diversity with respect to knowledge that is relevant for the purpose of a task or team has been acknowledged to affect the capacity of members to develop a team shared mental model. As such, 'diverse teams take longer and encounter frequent difficulties in integrating their different knowledge stores to reach a consensus and solve problems because of misperceptions, poor mutual understanding, and inhibited information sharing (e.g. Argote & McGrath, 1993; Gruenfeld et al., 1996; Jackson et al., 2003). [...] all these factors together will make the formation of shared and accurate TSMs more complicated and time consuming for knowledge-diverse teams' (Rico et al, 2008: 172).

Emotional processing is a special type of knowledge needed when working in teams. Drawing from Rico et al. (2008), we infer that gender diverse teams do not have (or believe not to have) a common understanding on how to deal with the acknowledged emotions occurring during teamwork. This then requires more communication and explicit coordination processes, instead of implicit ones (Espinosa, Lerch & Kraut, 2002), which in turn reflect on a team's effectiveness in an interdependent task (since the team must invest more time and effort to coordinate, which takes away from the limited resources a team has to focus on the task itself). Hence, the existing and perceived differences in dealing with emotions can lead to impairment in implicit coordination processes, and subsequently to a poorer performance.

This is in line with the predictions of the categorization–elaboration model (Van Knippenberg et al, 2004). The model posits that diversity has positive effects on performance when it brings about information elaboration (i.e. the exchange and integration of task relevant information). At the same time, diversity may be detrimental to performance to the extent that it engenders "us-them" distinctions (social categorization) and intergroup biases, because these processes interrupt the elaboration – exchange, discussion, and integration – of task-relevant information, with further negative impact on performance (Van Knippenberg et al, 2004). Gender is a relevant categorization criterion for emotional processing. Hence, the categorization-elaboration model would then predict that higher group emotional awareness enhances gender categorization salience, to the possible detriment of teamwork investment. In other words, in gender heterogeneous groups, where gender categorization salience is naturally present, emotional awareness is expected to further enhance it and shift the group's focus to dealing with differences. All along, homogenous

groups would use the same attribute (i.e. group emotional awareness) to enhance their work together and make the task-related processes smoother.

To conclude, group emotional awareness has systematically proven to enhance teamwork quality (Druskat & Wolff, 2001), which subsequently impacts team effectiveness (West & Sacramento, 2006). However, social categorization models predict that its positive effects would be stronger in gender homogeneous rather than heterogeneous groups. Study 1 tests the following hypothesis in a cross-sectional survey in organizational settings.

Hypothesis 1: Group emotional awareness will be positively related to team effectiveness, but more so in gender homogenous, rather than gender heterogeneous teams.

Study 1

Participants and procedure

One hundred and sixty one participants divided over 37 teams and across four Dutch organizations (45.9% TNT; 27% DSM; 13.5% Ernst & Young; 13.5% Palet) participated in the survey. 17 teams were homogeneous (i.e., male or female only) and 20 were heterogeneous (comprising both men and women) with respect to gender. Overall, the average age in the research sample is 39.33 (SD=10.93, min.=18, Max.=61), the average team size 5.52 (SD=2.92, min.=2, Max.=13), and 41% of the participants were male.

The four organizations (chosen because their team-based structure-i.e., most of their work organized in team projects) were invited through an official letter to participate in the survey. Once the agreement was given, the research assistant, together with the representatives from the organizations, chose the teams who are eligible to participate in the survey. The definition used for this selection was: real groups of at least three people who perform joint tasks in the organizational context. Upon selection, team members received the questionnaires to have them filled in at work and put them in a drop-box at the end of the day. Responses were then aggregated at team level, by computing the mean score (Barsade & Gibson, 2012).

Measures

Team effectiveness. Aligning with Hackman (1987), we see team effectiveness as a composite measure of team performance, viability and satisfaction. We hence used the corresponding scale (i.e., Team Effectiveness Scale) developed by Whelan (2007) for organizational settings. The questionnaire consists of 23 items (9 for performance, 9 for viability and 5 for satisfaction), measured on a five-step Likert scale and Cronbach's alpha is .96. Examples of items are: *'My team meets its financial and work activity goals to deliver value for money services' and 'Clients of my team are satisfied with the service provided by team members' for team performance, 'Individuals of the team are satisfied with the chances they have to accomplish new things working on this team' and 'Individuals of the team are generally satisfied to be working in this team' for satisfaction, and 'Staff training and development needs are systematically identified, resourced and made available to all members of the team' and 'Team members are willing to be flexible and perform other roles and jobs within the team'* for viability.

Group emotional awareness. For group emotional awareness, we used an instrument (Boroș & Curșeu, 2011) based on Druskat and Wolff's (2001) conceptualization of group emotional awareness. The scale consists of six items, measured on a five-step Likert scale (1 to 5) and Cronbach's alpha is .68. Examples of items are: *'We could tell how everyone felt by listening to the tone of our voices.'*, and *'Most of the time, we had a good sense of how each group member felt, even if they did not express it in words.'*

Results

The results presented in the correlation table indicate that because of the high correlation between the three effectiveness sub-scales and the theoretical conceptualization of team effectiveness as a three-faceted global construct it suffices to use team effectiveness in general in the data analysis, given also the very similar correlations between the three dimensions and the composite score with both group emotional awareness and gender diversity. Therefore, we only focused on the global scale in our further analyses.

Team gender diversity. We computed team gender diversity as a dichotomous variable, with gender homogenous teams labelled as 0, and gender heterogeneous ones as 1.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the scales used in Study 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for variables employed in Study 1

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Gender diversity	Team Effectiveness	Team Satisfaction	Team Perfor-mance	Team Viability	Emotional Awarenes s
Gender diversity	.30	.30	-	-.20	-.106	-.06	-.06	-.03
Team Effectiveness	3.62	.41		-	.80**	.78**	.76**	.57**
Team Satisfaction	1.49	.51			-	.68**	.79**	.48**
Team Performance	1.49	.51				-	.68**	.48**
Team Viability	1.54	.51					-	.53**
Emotional Awareness	3.28	.28						-

We used simple linear regression to test our first hypothesis. In block one, we introduced gender diversity and group emotional awareness, and in block two the interaction effect. Our data indicated indeed an interaction effect between group emotional awareness and team gender diversity upon team effectiveness (see Table 2 for detailed results and an overview of the standardized coefficients). As expected, gender homogenous teams benefit to a larger extent from the positive effect of group emotional awareness than gender heterogeneous teams (see Figure 1 for a graphic representation of this effect). While *group emotional awareness is beneficial for both types of teams, homogenous teams simply profit more from it.* A plausible explanation of this interaction effect between gender diversity and group emotional awareness is that emotional awareness enhances the salience of social categorization processes (inherent in gender heterogeneous groups) and thus induces process losses and a decrease of group effectiveness.

In order to further explore this plausible mechanism, we have conducted an experimental study in which, in gender diverse groups, we manipulated both the diversity beliefs of group members (to check the effects of social categorization more clearly) and emotional awareness.

Table 2. Two-way interaction between team gender diversity (dummy) and group emotional awareness (centred) for team effectiveness in Study 1

		Team effectiveness	
Model /Step		**1**	**2**
1	Gender diversity- GD	-.13	-.13
	Group emotional awareness- GEA	.20***	.81***
2	2 way interaction GDxGEA		-.34*
F change		9.02***	3.06*
R^2		.35	.40
AdjR^2		.31	.35

Legend: *p<.10; **p<.01, ***p<.001

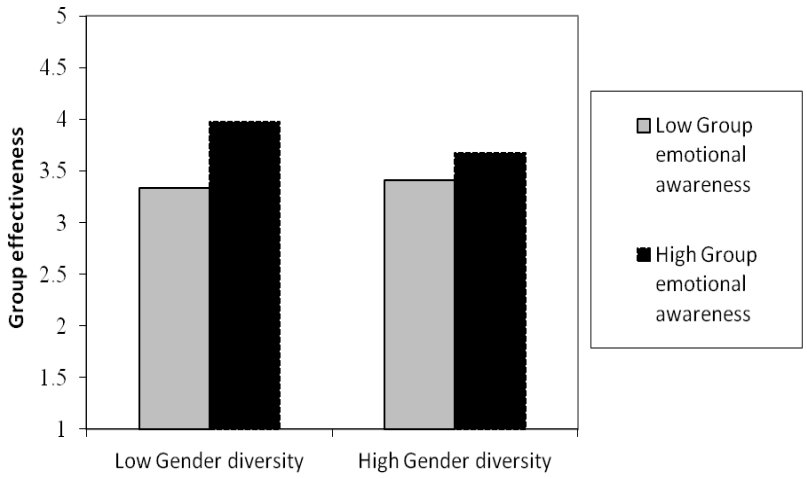

Figure 1. Plot of the two-way interaction between team gender diversity and group emotional awareness for team effectiveness in Study 1

Study 2

A second look at diversity

The findings of Study 1 showed that gender homogenous teams reap the benefits of emotional awareness without having to pay the price diverse teams pay: the salience of gender, and implicitly emotional differences within the team, and the possible difficulty in dealing with these differences, reflected in team effectiveness. But what happens if the negative effects of categorization are counteracted by value-in-diversity beliefs in a heterogeneous team? Can then group emotional awareness increase its positive impact on team effectiveness? According to van Knippenberg et al (2004), positive diversity beliefs (i.e., team members' beliefs that diversity is good for achieving the team's aims) are associated with positive responses rather than the negative effects of social categorization processes when team diversity is subjectively salient. In other words, positive diversity beliefs increase team effectiveness in heterogeneous teams. Therefore, a number of organizational interventions are now targeted to creating a 'culture of diversity' and stimulating people in seeing the benefits of working in diverse teams (Curtis & Dreachslin, 2008).

However, despite such interventions, team members can still harbour negative diversity beliefs and prefer working with similar others, because the process of working together in homogenous groups is less demanding. We contend that by focusing team members on reciprocal understanding and perspective taking, we create more empathy in the group (Kelly & Barsade, 2001), which will facilitate the teamwork processes and improve effectiveness. In other words, we suggest that *group emotional awareness norms offer an alternative, emotional route* (as opposed to cognitive interventions, which try to modify the content of stereotypes and diversity beliefs) to counteracting the negative consequences of categorization processes in diverse groups and thus facilitating effectiveness in diverse teams.

Hence, in our second study, we explore the interaction effect between diversity beliefs and group emotional awareness on team effectiveness, and propose that:

Hypothesis 2: Emotional awareness interacts with diversity beliefs in such a way that emotional awareness cancels the disruptive effect of negative diversity beliefs on team effectiveness.

Design

We used a 2x2 experimental design, manipulating both diversity beliefs (by framing team diversity as either beneficial or detrimental for the task at hand) and group emotional awareness norms (with or without).

Participants

One hundred and twenty six students (aged 20-35, M=23.5, SD=2.39; 61 males and 62

females) participated in 21 teams composed of 4-7 members in a classroom activity. Ten teams were in the emotional awareness condition, and eleven teams served as control (i.e., no emotional awareness manipulation). Only five of our teams were homogenous teams, and they were spread across all four experimental conditions.

Procedure

The 21 student groups were split in four experimental conditions. They had to work together on a diversity case study for two hours. At the beginning of the task, they received the experimental manipulations as part of their case study instructions.

For *group emotional awareness*, the manipulation consisted of six norms they needed to take into account to maximize their teamwork. Normative interventions are effective ways of changing the pattern of interpersonal interactions within groups (Curşeu & Schruijer, 2012). The norms used here were based on Druskat and Wolff's conceptualization of group emotional awareness (2001) and are clustered in two dimensions: interpersonal understanding and perspective taking.

For this manipulation, the control groups only received the instructions for the task they needed to work on, without the awareness manipulation.

Based on Druskat and Wolff's (2001) theorizing, the experimental groups received the following instruction as part of the general instructions for the case study they needed to work on:

'Read carefully the following information before you start:

Working in diverse groups requires heightened empathic abilities from group members. This ensures possibility of expression from all group members, and, more importantly, the recognition of these responses. Being able to decipher your own and other people's emotions is an important part of sensitivity awareness trainings.

Therefore, your performance will benefit if you implement the following strategies in your teamwork:

1. Have a "check in" at the beginning of the meeting – that is, ask how everyone is doing.

2. Assume that undesirable behaviour takes place for a reason. Find out what that reason is. Ask questions and listen. Avoid negative attributions.

3. As the work proceeds, tell your team-mates what you are thinking and how you are feeling about the process.

4. When you make decisions, ask whether everyone agrees with the decision.

5. Question the quickness of taking a decision.

6. Ask quiet members what they think.'

The first three items of the instructions were reflecting interpersonal understanding, whereas the latter three, perspective taking.

Manipulation check. At the end of the task students responded to three items assessing group emotional awareness. The items for the manipulation check were: 'We knew how everyone felt just by looking at each other.'; 'We could tell how everyone felt by listening to the tone of our voices.', and 'Most of the time, we had a good sense of how each group member felt, even if they did not express it in words.' The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .65. Groups in the emotional awareness condition (means= 3.53, SD=.32) had a higher self-report of group emotional awareness (t-test=3.82, sig=.06) than control groups (i.e., without the awareness manipulation: means= 3.28, SD=.25).

For diversity beliefs framing, a public announcement was made at the beginning of the exercise, informing them that based on previous experience, being in a gender diverse team is beneficial or detrimental to the task. This manipulation is based on van Knippenberg, Haslam and Platow's (2007) own experimental manipulation of diversity beliefs.

Manipulation check. For diversity beliefs framing, students had to first respond to a written question when they started to work. The question asked whether having a diverse group was beneficial/detrimental/irrelevant for the task. Only one student did not check according to the manipulation given, and we excluded him from the sample.

Groups in each experimental condition worked in different rooms, in order to avoid the spill-over effects of the manipulations. At the end of the two-hour tasks students were peer-evaluated on the solution to the case-study (the measure of team effectiveness). The controlled design in study 2 use of external evaluators for team performance were meant to complement the limits of the cross-sectional, self-report design in Study 1.

Performance evaluation: peer and supervisor evaluations. After an hour, all teams had to present their solution for the case study to their colleagues and the course supervisor (who is one of the authors). Independently, each other team and the professor assessed each presented solution upon three dimensions: practical relevance/impact, theoretical accuracy in the reasoning behind, creativity. These evaluations (given on a 1-10 scale) were the result of team consensus and they were given in writing at the end of the presentations. Following the evaluation on the three dimensions, students had to average their grades into one final grade. The evaluation of performance is the mean evaluation of all the peer team evaluations and the course supervisor.

Results

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to test for performance differences among the four experimental conditions, given by the combination of the diversity frame and emotional awareness manipulations. In this analysis, we controlled for actual gender diversity (which had a significant impact on performance: $F(1, 16) = 4.94$, $p<.05$). There was a significant interaction between group emotional awareness and diversity beliefs at $p=.10$: $F(1, 16)=.27$, $p<.10$. Simple main effects indicated that overall, teams with group emotional awareness norms ($M=6.97$, $SD=.30$) performed no different than teams without emotional awareness norms ($M=7.09$, $SD=.37$): $F(1, 16) =.001$, $p=>.10$. However, teams with positive diversity beliefs ($M=.71$, $SD=.29$) performed better than teams with negative diversity beliefs ($M=6.86$, $SD=.36$): $F(1, 16)=.39$, $p<.05$ (see Figure 2 for a graphic representation of these effects).

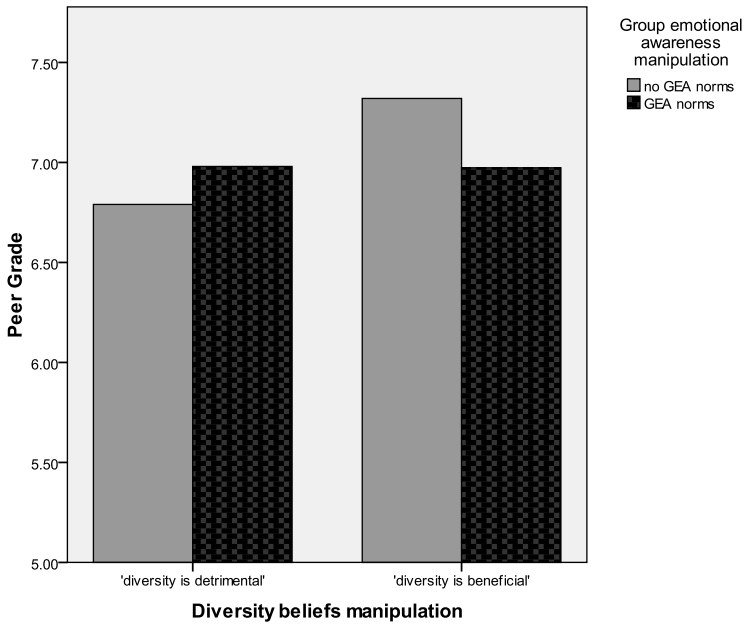

Figure 2. ANOVA plots for the performance of teams under the framing of diversity and group emotional awareness manipulations in Study 2

Multiple comparisons of the four groups indicate that the groups in the condition 'diversity is detrimental and without group emotional awareness norms' ($M = 6.79$, 95% CI [6.54, 7.12]) had a significantly lower performance than the ones in the 'diversity is beneficial and without group emotional awareness norms' condition ($M = 7.32$, 95% CI [7.06, 7.57]), $p<.05$. No significant differences were found between the conditions 'diversity is beneficial and group emotional awareness norms' ($M = 6.97$, 95% CI [6.77, 7.17]) and 'diversity is detrimental and group emotional awareness norms' ($M = 6.98$, 95% CI [5.64,

8.31]). In other words, both the groups that do or do not have diversity beliefs have similar performances, provided they share group emotional awareness norms.

General discussion

The results obtained both in organizational as well as experimental settings support the *usefulness of fostering group emotional awareness and specify conditions for its utility.* First, our findings show that *gender homogenous teams benefit more from it as compared to gender heterogeneous teams.* Our evidence shows that there are instances when group emotional awareness in diverse teams can indeed focus the attention and resources of the team on the affective dynamics experienced, to the detriment of focusing on the task processes. With this finding, we align to previous researches who confirm that *working in homogenous teams is easier than working in diverse ones* (Roberge & van Dick, 2010) However, starting from these findings, we went beyond looking only at actual diversity, and tried to explain the impact of group emotional awareness in gender diverse teams by also taking into account the diversity beliefs of teams. We hence found out *that although group emotional awareness does not improve the effectiveness of diverse teams that hold positive diversity beliefs, it can cancel the disruptive effects of negative diversity beliefs.* In the following lines, we explore possible mechanisms for these findings.

Resource allocation theory posits that we have a finite resource pool (Kahneman, 1973; Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989) from which group processes draw. Emotionally aware groups automatically allocate resources for the identification and appraisal of emotions generated by group interactions. Homogenous groups however, are then able to deal with them while using less attention and energetic resources because same gender members are likely to share norms for emotional expression and communication (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008). They do so via implicit coordination processes, which imply the existence of a shared mental model on dealing with emotions (Espinosa, Lerch & Kraut, 2004). These models form with more difficulty in diverse, as opposed to homogenous teams (Rico et al, 2008), because of gender stereotypes on differences in emotional experience and expression.

The salience of gender categorization, along with gender stereotyping on emotionality, makes the awareness of emotional dynamics more difficult to tackle. While homogenous groups can coordinate this process implicitly, diverse groups might need to coordinate explicitly –via communication processes (Espinosa, Lerch & Kraut, 2004). Hence, they need to tackle issues in a systematic, as opposed to automatic, manner. Thus, they block a larger share of their energetic and time resources, in the detriment of working on the task at hand, which reflects on decreased effectiveness (all conditions being equal). This is why homogenous teams benefit more from group emotional awareness than heterogeneous ones (as shown in Study 1). This finding aligns with previous research on highly aware teams of novices, which, lacking intervention (i.e., regulatory) skills (Elfenbein, 2006), are blocked by the realization of their emotional dynamics and do not know what to do about it. In the same study, it was suggested that more mature teams, who also have regulatory processes in place, benefit tremendously from awareness processes. In other words, our results point to the fact that awareness is only as useful as the skills of dealing with the newly-understood situation go. The question raised then for future research is: what happens if teams would build from the start norms regarding the regulation of group emotions? How would group emotional awareness impact then heterogeneous (and homogeneous) groups?

Our second study looked more in-depth at the added value of group emotional awareness for diverse teams, depending on their diversity beliefs. As our results in Study 2 indicate, although group emotional awareness does not improve the effectiveness of diverse teams that hold positive diversity beliefs, group emotional awareness can in fact compensate for the lack of value-in-diversity beliefs in a team (or, extrapolating, in an organization). Most stereotypes people hold are implicit and acting in an automatic fashion (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Given this proposition, part of the cognitive interventions on stimulating a diversity climate are doomed to fail (Pendry et al, 2007). However, our results indicate that when we should fail to create a pro-diversity climate in teams through direct cognitive interventions, we can still intervene by offering group emotional awareness norms. Rather than tackling the

categorization issue, these norms focus on the affective side of interpersonal interaction. Research on exposure to individuals of a negatively stereotyped category indicated that we end up accepting the individual, without changing our opinion on the category (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Group emotional awareness norms use this existing mechanism in order to bring about the same positive effects as diversity beliefs, but by using the affective, rather than the cognitive path to change.

Limitations and future directions

Next to its contributions, our study has several limitations: The first study is based on a cross sectional design and although gender diversity is a group design feature (unlikely to be influenced by the other measurements), we cannot draw clear causal inferences based on the first study. This limitation is partly addressed in the second experimental study. The limit of the second study, in this respect, is that the pool of participants we had access to for the experimental manipulation limited us in working with mainly diverse groups. Therefore, we could not replicate the results of the homogenous-heterogeneous comparison of study 1 in study 2, before building further on the diversity-beliefs arguments.

Second, in the first study data for both independent and dependent variables were collected from the same source therefore this study is susceptible to the common method bias. In line with Evans (1985) we can argue that because we are testing an interaction effect the common method bias is less of a problem for our design. Furthermore, in order to maintain a straightforward design, the first study does not take into account other moderators of diversity indicated by extant literature. We also tried to compensate for this limitation in the multiple data-source design used in study 2.

Another limitation of this research is the fact that we did not assess directly team shared mental models or implicit coordination processes in either of the two studies. However, the present research aligns with existing models of implicit team coordination and adds to the affective dimension of these models (Espinosa et al, 2004; Fiore & Salas, 2004; Rico et al, 2008), and our results open future venues for research aimed at investigated these mechanisms more in depth. For instance, a point to be raised for future research regards the fact that the detrimental short-term effects of group emotional awareness in diverse teams might unfold in different ways in the longer run. Previous research (Curşeu, Boroş & Oerlemans, 2012; Druskat & Wolff, 2007) has already pointed to the differential effects of emotional awareness and regulation processes in short-term as opposed to long-term groups. Team implicit coordination theorizing also points to the fact that initial costs diverse teams bear might in time bring them benefits in the complexity of their shared mental model, reflecting hence upon their performance (Rico et al, 2008). Therefore, the exploration of groups having a longer tenure will bring valuable perspectives on these mechanisms.

Limitations and future directions

In answer to our initial question, we found no negative consequences of group emotional awareness, but different instances that make its positive impact more or less prominent. Since it is a group trait that requires energetic and time resources, it is important to know when to capitalize on emotional awareness norms in teams and when it's superfluous to do so.

Second, we find that group emotional awareness might be a precious, and insufficiently tapped yet, resource to deal with implicit stereotypes in diverse teams.

Practitioner points

- Group emotional awareness is most effective in gender homogenous teams, because they deal with the acknowledged emotions in a more automatic manner, hence without interfering with work processes.
- When fostering group emotional awareness in gender diverse teams, make sure they also build emotion regulation norms upfront, so that being aware of the emotional dynamics would not block task processes.
- When running diversity awareness trainings in your organizations or your teams, remember to add group emotional awareness interventions to the traditional methods (which target cognitive modifications). This way, you would have two routes for targeting the desired change. Implementing group

emotional awareness norms can counteract the impact of negative beliefs about diversity, by helping team members to see people instead of categories. It is an alternative type of intervention aimed at maximizing the benefits of gender diversity.

Note:

At the time of conducting this research, Smaranda Boroș and Petru L. Curșeu were working within the Department of Organisation Studies, Tilburg University, The Netherlands. Currently Smaranda Boroș is working within the Area People and Organisation, Vlerick Business School, Belgium.

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