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## Surviving and Thriving in Public Service

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### Surviving and Thriving in Public Service

As the demand for public service and government accountability grows, public sectors are constantly facing challenges in developing and maintaining competencies among the public servants. These challenges signify the need for embracing a performance improvement theory to bolster public service delivery. McCleskey (2014) considered emotional intelligence as an array of competencies and skills that facilitate leadership achievement, and categorized the arrays in five concepts. Emotional intelligence is also described as the ability to evaluate one's as well as other's emotion to discriminate between them and apply the information to manage one's own thinking and actions (Guy & Lee, 2015). Leadership is also emotional, and therefore, emotional intelligence theory correlates with leadership. Emotional intelligence involves the ways of recognizing, evaluating, and deciding on how to think. Thus, Emotional intelligence is a productivity improvement theory that will be an efficient resolution to surviving and thriving in public service.

Emotional intelligence theory has been evolving over decades in response to perceptions that the construct intelligence does not adequately describe all human ability aspects in all contexts. The theory was later expanded and researched to go beyond the traditional cognitive description of intelligence. According to Vratskikh, Al-Lozi, & Maqableh, (2016) public sectors need to examine how they can effectively maintain and develop social and emotional skills like self-management, empathy and their ability to build social networks as well as relationships. Lack of emotional intelligence has led to many sectors failing to execute their services to the public and maintain their employees. For public service to survive and thrive, developing emotional intelligence helps in preparing public servants to be high performers.

The theory seeks to formalize how public servants get along with each other, including how they can manage their emotions in promoting the service. According to Guy & Lee (2015), emotional intelligence has four main domains and eighteen competencies. These domains are self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship management. The domains can provide a practical guideline for building communication and leadership skills within a public service sector. This will also help in opening up unconventional thinking and developing public servants' sense of social interactions and self-management in the execution of their duties. Since most government officials struggle with the urgencies and complexities of effective communication in a competitive world, a small increase in EI quotient and human proficiency will assist in making the public service sectors thrive (Vratskikh, Al-Lozi, & Maqableh, 2016). Therefore, emotional intelligence models are a vital solution that enables thriving and surviving in public service.

Using emotional intelligence theory in public service will help improve workplace performance. Guy & Lee (2015) point out that the competencies of the theory directly or indirectly influence workplace performance. Often, civil servants experience upbeats which are likely to go the extra mile in pleasing the public and therefore improve the services offered to the people. A logarithm predicts that a relationship exists, such that for every 1 percent improvement, there is a 2 percent increase in the quality of service being delivered (Vratskikh, Al-Lozi & Maqableh, 2016). This means that there is a need for more supportive and empathetic leaders to ensure there is survival in public service. As a result of the increasing demand for emotional engagement in public service, leaders need to drive the service environment and predisposition the public servants to provide quality services to the people.

In a case whereby public service employees can understand their own emotion and feelings, it is considered a personal skill. On the other hand, being aware of the public sector and administrative units are social skills necessary in understanding the ethos within which emotion works. An individual has to efficiently integrate both aspects of personal and social skills in their public service delivery. This integration involves a high level of proficiency through which an individual understands the emotion of others and the way the organization affects them (Guy & Lee, 2015). The emotional intelligence theory is credited for facilitating the understanding of others, which is reflected as interacting in an organization that is aimed at improving productivity. It also symbolizes the improved relationship as well as a general understanding of each other within the departments. Public service sectors transcend routine work, as it involves intra- and inter-departmental interactions and interactions with the public for effective service delivery. Emotional intelligence helps public servants in their departments to practice organizational self-awareness (Vratskikh, Al-Lozi & Maqableh, 2016). This assists in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the organization hence easy determining what is needed for improvements.

Emotional intelligence is integral in improving social skills. McCleskey (2014) indicates that in a public service sector, individuals with good social skills often achieve high in their leadership management since they are intelligent communicators. The leaders with social skills are well versed in conflict resolutions. They make individuals team members understand the vision of the organization, offer proper enlightenment as well as creating motivation and inspiration among the team members. It is therefore apparent that public sectors require individuals with emotional intelligence since they easily win the support of their team and

believes in their leadership. Social skills help in setting acceptable behaviors and values in the organization.

In a government agency, there are public servants of different backgrounds with different views about every aspect. The large socio-cultural diversity may impede performance and service delivery. Emotional intelligence makes individuals flexible to changes and adapts to the agency system easily. It also facilitates faster problem solving between these individuals from different cultures where when there is a contrast in understanding (Miao, Humphrey & Qian, 2016). It is credited for assisting in emotional control over certain issues, thus promoting a friendly working environment within the public sector.

With diversity, collaboration, teamwork, and co-operation are increasingly becoming significant issues in United States public sectors. The interest in corporate skills have also become more vital. In this regard, the position of interpersonal skills in raising a team and individual performance is appropriately recognized in the public sectors. The key to interpersonal skills has been emotional intelligence. According to Miao, Humphrey & Qian (2016), EI quotient influences the aptitude of connecting with individuals and understanding their emotions for harmonious co-existence. High EI quotient generates a considerable enthusiasm and can lead to professional and personal success among the public servant's academics and the public. Common work-place testimonials allude that emotional intelligence leads to a positive performance among the public servants enabling the sectors to thrive (Vratskikh, Al-Lozi & Maqableh, 2016). Thus emotional intelligence in public service will enhance careers and improve the general quality of work that sustains the sectors.

As the United States continues to experience major developments, both private and public sector organizations should embrace innovative management and leadership. Guy & Lee,

(2015) assert that any ignored pulse in the viability of a public sector should read in the typical emotional states of the public servants. To limit the response and understanding from the workplace perspective, civil servants should ignore feelings that facilitate or interfere with the shared goals. The quest of making public administrators, managers, and leaders to be more emotionally intelligent is vital for success and should be actively embarked on and pursued in the public service.

The contemporary work rules are in a continuous state of uncertainty with new frameworks for evaluating public servants. It is increasingly renowned that curriculum vitae, good credentials and high GPA scores, and impressive technical skills do not provide direct impact on workers with lower emotional intelligence. Workplaces are all about relationships and the interactions with people and, therefore, public servants with high emotional intelligence should be regarded as valuable assets. Miao, Humphrey & Qian (2016), emphasize that approximately ten percent of success is accounted for by general intelligence accounts, which are defined through occupational status and academic achievement. Similarly, Vratskikh, Al-Lozi, and Maqableh (2016), made strong assertions the role of emotional intelligence as a contributor to the workplace and individual success. Intellectual intelligence contributes to 20 percent of the success in life, while emotional intelligence attributes the rest of 80%. Therefore, emotional intelligence is a vital factor in ensuring success and more so enabling thriving in the public sector.

Over the last ten years, the advent of the emotional intelligence phenomenon has impacted on the traditional perspective of what it takes to be a good and efficient public servant and leader. In this regard, there has been an unprecedented increase in the interest in emotional intelligence with different research delving into the theory and books being written on the topic.

The books describe more of what emotional intelligence, how it can influence the effectiveness of public service, and its importance to the development of leadership. For example, Daniel Goleman co-authored and authored *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, *Emotional Intelligence* as well as *Primal Leadership* (Miao, Humphrey & Qian, 2016). Actual case studies, empirical data, and relevant examples alluded to in each of the literature make strong cases for the significant potential and importance for developing the emotional capabilities that all public servants possess. Miao, Humphrey & Qian (2016) further indicates that more government agencies are recognizing that encouraging emotional intelligence skills is a significant component in the management of public sectors. Emotional intelligence theory is thus significant in the public service workplaces and is not only limited, enabling quality service of public servants in government agencies.

In conclusion, emotional intelligence theory is an effective improvement model in enabling productivity, survival, and thriving in public service. With the rapid developments in United States and global public service sectors, there is a need for innovative leadership and management. Researchers present stronger claims on the contribution of emotional intelligence to success in public sectors and individuals. Leaders in the government agencies should develop a range of emotional intelligence competencies to enable them to make choices and assess situations intuitively. Through the competencies and models of emotional intelligence, public sectors will be able to thrive in the competitive environment and solve a multitude of situations. Emotional intelligence enables the public service to survive and thrive.



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