

Leaders of the pack display high EQ, study finds

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The ability to understand emotions is a key ingredient in people who become leaders in groups with no formal authority, a new paper has found.

The findings come through two different studies using commerce students. Study participants were given an emotional ability test as part of the study, as well as a self-analysis of their emotional skills. Then, they organized themselves into small groups or were randomly assigned to small groups and were given a group project to do.

At the end of the project they were asked to identify whom they thought had shown the greatest leadership. Those identified by their peers as leaders scored high on the emotional ability test, which included tasks such as identifying emotions in faces in a photograph, and rating the effectiveness of different [emotion regulation](#) strategies. People's perceptions of their own emotional skills, however, did not predict leadership as reliably.

The study adds to evidence that [emotional intelligence](#) is a separate trait from other leadership qualities such as having cognitive intelligence and being cooperative, open to ideas, and conscientious.

"Traditionally we've had the assumption that leaders have high IQ, are gregarious individuals, or happen to be dominant personalities," says researcher Stéphane Côté, a professor at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management and one of four researchers involved

with the study.

"But this shows it's not just about these traditional factors," says Prof. Côté. "It's also about being able to process other people's emotions. Anybody who wants to pursue a position of leadership and power can benefit from these abilities."

The study was published In the June 2010 issue of [Leadership Quarterly](#) and was co-authored by Paulo N. Lopes of the Catholic University of Portugal, Peter Salovey of Yale University, and Christopher T.H. Miners of Queen's University.

Provided by University of Toronto, Rotman School of Management

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