

ELABORATING ON THE THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF THE CONCEPT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract. The aim of this research is to shed light on the theoretical aspects of the concept of emotional intelligence. The aim was achieved by setting two objectives: first, the article defines the concept of emotional intelligence, and in the second part, it reveals the structure of emotional intelligence. The analysis of the scientific literature has shown that emotional intelligence enables people to identify, monitor, understand and manage their emotions, as it relates to motivation to work and to build successful relationships.

Keywords: emotional intelligence (EQ), intelligence quotient (IQ), emotions, personality traits

INTRODUCTION

Since the publication of Goleman's best-selling books *Emotional Intelligence* (1995; 2000), there has been a tremendous interest in the topic of emotional intelligence. But what exactly is emotional intelligence? In his book, the author could not have explained the importance of emotional intelligence more precisely than in the words of Aristotle: "Anyone can get angry - that's easy. But getting angry with the right person, within the right limits, at the right time, for the right reason, in the right way, is not easy at all" (*Nicomachean Ethics*).

Academic intelligence has been studied more extensively in science, and IQ (intelligence quotient) is known to be related to various personal achievements, but the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions and those of others is equally important for one's success (Rana, et. al, 2017; Lekavičienė & Antinienė, 2015).

The literature provides various definitions of emotional intelligence, but the most common one is the ability to know and manage one's own and others' feelings and emotions, or the ability to distinguish between emotions and to use the information in order to achieve a single goal or action. High emotional intelligence leads to appropriate human behaviour and more durable relationships, productive work and better performance.

At the most general level, emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognise and regulate emotions in oneself and others (Poskey, 2006; Stys & Brown, 2004). An approach that dismisses the importance of feelings to human nature is likely to be short-sighted. Understanding emotions is important because understanding emotions determines a person's subsequent thoughts, behaviour and attitudes. Although emotions are often dismissed as irrational and therefore disturbing, research has shown that human emotions play a crucial role in decision-making. The emotional part of the human brain works very closely with the thinking part of the brain to help with decision-making and reasoning, which is why emotions are so important in everyone's life. So is the ability to justify one's actions, to keep dreams alive, to control one's impulses, to not be satisfied with what one has achieved, to control one's moods, to not give in to despair that hinders sober thinking, and to empathise with the situation of others. No one can yet pinpoint the power of emotional intelligence to determine one person's life or another, but a person with a high intelligence quotient may be lacking in a key success factor: emotional maturity. As a result, a person with an excellent education, good analytical skills, sharp logical thinking, etc., may not achieve recognition, become a leader in his/her field, or succeed in his/her personal life (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000; Nelis, et al., 2009; Lekavičienė & Antinienė, 2015).

In this research, our objective is to delve into the theoretical facets of emotional intelligence. We aim to achieve this by scrutinizing various definitions of emotional intelligence and elucidating its underlying structure.

THEORIES AND CONCEPTS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The Intelligence Quotient (IQ) was developed and used in the first half of the twentieth century as a measure of intelligence but was soon challenged because it did not take into account situational factors, such as environment or cultural background, to predict achievement.

In terms of the history of the study of emotional intelligence or otherwise known as emotional quotient (hereafter referred to as EQ), when theorists began to hypothesise that several types of intelligence might overlap in a single person, Thorndike (1920), an influential psychologist in the fields of learning, education, and intelligence, revealed that there are not one, but several types of intelligence that people can possess. One of these he called social intelligence, which involves a person's ability to act wisely in the space of human relationships. Later, Gardner raised the concept of multiple intelligences and proposed the theory of multiple intelligences, which dictated that individuals have abilities in several domains, including the verbal, mathematical, musical, spatial, motor and environmental domains. Gardner believed that these intelligences are as important as the type of intelligence typically measured in IQ tests (Gardner 1983, Stys and Brown 2004).

Later, Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000) proposed another type of intelligence, which they called emotional intelligence. The authors defined emotional intelligence as a form of intelligence that involves the ability to observe one's

own and others' feelings and emotions, to process them, and to use this information to guide one's thoughts and actions. It is the ability to know and manage one's own and others' feelings and emotions, or the ability to discriminate between emotions and to use the information to achieve a single goal or action (Mayer, et. al, 1999, 2000). Later, these authors refined the definition of emotional intelligence to include the ability to perceive emotions, to integrate emotions by facilitating thought, understanding and regulating emotions to promote personal growth (Mayer, et. al, 1999, 2000).

Whereas it has been argued that neither experience nor education can substitute for cognitive intelligence, as measured by IQ, Goleman (1995; 2000) has argued that basic emotional skills can be developed and refined in childhood with effort. For him, scholarship and a high IQ do not help a person to prepare for life, to learn how to deal with failure and to seize unexpected opportunities. A high IQ does not guarantee prosperity, prestige or happiness in life. Schools and culture, he argued, prioritise knowledge to the neglect of emotional intelligence, in other words, the qualities of character that are crucial to each person's destiny. Like mathematics and reading, emotional life requires skill and knowledge. There is no shortage of evidence that people with a high emotional intelligence - who know how to manage their feelings, who understand and take account of other people's feelings - have an advantage in any area of life (whether romantic or intimate relationships, or in organisational activities that require the ability to understand certain unwritten rules). They are more satisfied with life, more successful, more able to curb their whims and therefore more creative.

The concept of emotional intelligence provides more insight into what constitutes intelligence or intelligent behaviour. In a broader sense, emotional intelligence deals with the emotional, personal, social and experiential aspects of intelligence that are vital to everyday functioning. The less cognitive parts of intelligence are concerned with understanding ourselves and others, relating to people, adapting to and coping with our immediate environment. These factors increase a person's ability to cope successfully with environmental demands. Emotional intelligence is tactical and immediate and therefore reflects a person's intelligence and ability to cope in the world (Bar-On, 2004).

Shmidt (2008) described EQ as the ability to identify and respond to the emotions and feelings of others, and the ability to help others manage their emotions. Other authors have referred to EI as the intelligent use of emotions when they are directed to work in a direction that influences behaviour and thinking in order to achieve specific goals (Weisinger, 1998, Matthews, Zeider & Roberts, 2004). According to Salovey & Grewal (2005), EI is the ability to know, understand, and express oneself; to know, understand, and get along with others; to control strong emotions and impulses; and to adapt to change and to solve personal or social problems. Bar-On, with a slightly different perspective, defined emotional intelligence as caring about one's own and others' understanding of people and adapting to one's immediate environment in order to cope with the demands of the environment. He considered emotional intelligence as all non-cognitive abilities, knowledge and competences that enable a person to cope successfully with various life situations (Lekavičienė & Antinienė, 2015; Vandervoort, 2006).

Salovey & Grewal (2005) took a broader view of intelligence and tried to reassess its impact on people's lives. The aim of their research was to demonstrate how important and how much of a life-changing factor "personal" or emotional intelligence is, manifesting itself in five main areas:

1. Knowing your feelings. Failure to understand one's true feelings makes people dependent on them. People who have a deeper understanding of their feelings are better able to navigate their lives and manage their most important matters, from getting married to choosing a job.

2. Managing emotions. The ability to manage feelings, to steer them in the right direction, depends mostly on self-awareness. People who lack this ability are endlessly confronted with despair, while those who have it in abundance quickly regain their equilibrium when life's troubles strike.

3. The ability to achieve. In order to achieve a goal, it is important to manage our feelings, to stay focused, to be purposeful, to do our work well and to be creative. The ability to fit in with others and to work together ensures the best results in any activity. Those who have developed this ability are very active and creative, and can cope well with any task.

4. The ability to see other people's feelings. Empathy, the ability to empathise with another person's state of mind, is another quality that comes from emotional self-awareness and is essential for communication. Those who can empathise with others' feelings are more aware of others' needs and desires. This quality is not only necessary for those whose work involves care work, but is also important for those working in commerce, management and education.

5. Interpersonal relationships. Communication skills are character traits that help you gain popularity, leadership status and good relationships with other people. People with these qualities do well wherever they have to work, working together with others. They can be called the stars of social life.

To summarise the analysis of the academic literature carried out in this section, emotional intelligence refers to a person's ability to be aware of his or her own and others' emotions, and to build stable relationships by controlling his or her own behaviour and that of others.

STRUCTURE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Given the different perceptions of EQ, it can be broadly defined as the abilities related to personality traits that enable one to recognise and understand one's own and others' emotions and their meaning, to assimilate and manage them, and to dispose of the information appropriately, for example, by controlling one's own and others' behaviour in the face of the emotions involved (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999; Goleman, 1995; Khalili, 2012).

Emotional intelligence essentially enables people to recognise, manage and regulate not only negative but also positive emotions (Garbenis, 2020).

According to Shapiro (1998), the term emotional intelligence has come to be used to describe emotional qualities that are important for human success, such as empathy, expressing and understanding feelings, adaptability, perseverance, friendliness, respect, and control.

Goleman (2006) identifies four domains of emotional intelligence:

- 1) self-knowledge;
- 2) self-control;
- 3) empathy;
- 4) relationship management.

Self-knowledge is the awareness of one's inner states, preferences, resources and hunches. If a person lacks self-awareness, it is difficult for him/her to notice his/her weaknesses. Confidence in knowing one's strengths is not enough (Goleman, 2006; Gómez-Leal, et al., 2022). Self-knowledge was identified by Mayer, Salovey & Caruso (2000) as self-awareness - the ability for a person to be aware of both his or her own mood and his or her thoughts about that mood.

Self-control. People can be categorised according to how they respond to and manage their feelings (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000; Chin, Anantharaman & Tong, 2011):

- Those who know themselves well. People who understand their moods naturally orient themselves in their emotional lives. Their sober perception of their feelings underpins other qualities of their character: they are independent, well aware of the limits of their abilities, in excellent mental health and optimistic. When their mood breaks down, they do not suffer and are able to repair it. In short, their knowledge helps them manage their feelings.

- The stuck ones. These people are constantly in a quagmire of feelings and cannot get out of it because they are a kind of mood slave. They are unpredictable, unaware of their feelings, unsure of what they are going to do next, and do not even try to mend their mood a little bit. They feel helpless in their own emotional world because emotion is king.

- Reconcilers. These people are usually aware of what they are feeling, but they are completely dependent on their moods and tend to accept them. Reconcilers seem to be of two types: some are generally well-disposed and therefore least concerned about changing anything, while others, although aware of the mood, accept it without resisting it or trying to lighten it. This is the behaviour of sad people who have given up.

According to Goleman (2006), *empathy* can be defined as compassion for other people's feelings, needs and concerns, and is therefore the basis for many moral decisions and actions. Empathy is the basis of morality, as empathy for the suffering or threatened person is a way of sharing their grief and helping them (Rana & et al., 2017; Poskey, 2006).

Relationship management (social skills) is the ability to elicit a desired response from others. Caruso, Bienn & Kornacki (2013) identifies four skills as components:

- Organizational skills;
- The ability to negotiate;
- Ability to establish personal relationships;
- Ability to analyse relationships.

According to Goleman (2000), these communication skills are based on parts of emotional intelligence and must be aligned with the individual's needs and feelings, otherwise they become unnatural communication tools.

Since self-awareness and self-control are linked to personal skills, it could be argued that they constitute personal competence. Empathy and relationship management relate to knowledge, skills and abilities that are related to other people, so these areas of emotional intelligence could be called social competence.

CONCLUSIONS

An analysis of the scientific literature reveals that emotional intelligence can be defined as an individual's capacity to effectively regulate their emotions and feelings, harnessing these emotional states to inspire and drive their work performance, and cultivate prosperous interpersonal relationships.

It can be argued that emotional intelligence can be categorized into two primary domains of competencies: personal and social competence. Within these domains lie specific emotional intelligence competencies, encompassing an individual's capacity to rationalize their actions, exercise emotional restraint, attain predefined objectives while navigating dissatisfaction with results, adeptly handle their own emotional states, and exhibit empathy towards others' circumstances.

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