EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE—A KEY TO PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

In the present era of the competitive and globalised world only thing which is constant is change. Wherein industrial and IT revolution has brought in newer technology and methods of work and production, market forces define the ways and means to sell the product/services. Work force or human beings who are the building block of any work organisation are the primary recipients of this change process. They have to adapt to the change process for their survival in the organisations and for ensuring the survival of the organisation in the global world. For successful survival something more than cognitive capabilities named intelligence and knowledge are required amongst the work force, which is popularly known as emotional intelligence. The author of the present paper traces the roots of the concept of emotional intelligence and also outlines the need and importance of having higher emotional capabilities for better wellbeing in general and enhanced performance at work place in particular.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Interpersonal Intelligence, Organisational Behaviour, Intrapersonal Intelligence

The roots of emotional intelligence can be traced back to Darwin’s early work on the importance of emotional expression for survival and adaptation. In the recent era, the definitions of intelligence emphasise both cognitive aspects (such as memory and problem solving) and non cognitive aspects of intelligence such as emotional intelligence. For instance, Wechsler (1940) described the influence of non-intellective factors on intelligent behaviour, and further argued that the models of intelligence can’t be adequately described in the absence of these factors. According to Gardner (1983) as well the traditional definitions of intelligence fails to fully explain cognitive ability, so he introduced the idea of multiple intelligence which included both interpersonal intelligence and intrapersonal Intelligence. Thus, even though the names given to the concept varied, there was a common belief that the traditional definitions of

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intelligence lacked in their ability to fully explain performance outcomes and should be complimented with the EI.

Earlier, it was thought that performance is the outcome of certain abilities, collectively known as intelligence. However, as the definitions of intelligence is being broadened to include emotional intelligence as one of its important components, so the role of emotions is seen to be equally or even more responsible for performance.

Intelligence refers to abilities to adjust with the situations and refers to individual differences in the ability to acquire knowledge to think and reason effectively, and to deal adaptively with the environment. Emotions are powerful organisers of thought and action and paradoxically indispensable for reasoning and rationality. EQ comes to the aid of IQ when there is a need to solve important problems or to make a key decision. Emotions awaken intuition and curiosity, which assist in anticipating an uncertain future and planning our actions accordingly.

The emotional intelligence is an indispensable activator and enhancer of IQ, and interrelates with each other and this creates a dynamic tension from one to the other, stabilising their respective energies. For people with identical IQ, some outperform others. This suggests something beyond IQ is at work. When emotions are acknowledged and guided constructively, they enhance performance. Unlike IQ, EQ can be developed and nurtured even in adulthood and can prove beneficial to one’s health, relationship and performance. Emotional intelligence can be learned and gradually developed unlike IQ, which after a particular age cannot be developed & can be developed through experience. Competencies keep on growing through experiences; people get better and better in handling emotions, influencing others and in social adroitness. In fact, studies that have tracked people’s level of EI through the years show that people get better and better in those capabilities as they grow handling their own emotions and impulses.

Emotional intelligence is a set of acquired skills and competencies that predict positive outcomes at home with family members, in school and at work. People who possess these competencies are healthier, less depressed, and more productive at work and have better relationships. EQ embraces two aspects of intelligence:

(A) Understanding yourself, your goals, intentions, responses, and behaviour.
(B) Understanding other’s emotions and their feelings.

Salovey (2005) subsumes Gardner’s personal intelligence in his basic definition of emotional intelligence, expanding these abilities into five main domains; such as knowing one’s emotions, managing emotions, motivating oneself, recognising emotions in others and handling relationships.

Emotional intelligence appears to be a more comprehensive version of Gardner’s personal intelligences but most of the attributes are the same. The Gardner’s works on MI multiple intelligence and other translations of his work, the following characteristics of emotional intelligence have been identified:
1. **Interpersonal Intelligence:** People possessing interpersonal intelligence possess natural leadership abilities are readily available to give advice to friends who have problems, are ‘people smart’, enjoy socialising with peers and social occasions, enjoy a sense of belonging to groups — may belong to clubs, committees, or other organisations, enjoys Informally teaching other kids, Likes to play games with others, Have two or more close friends, has a well-developed sense of empathy concern for others, Others often seek out this student’s company — others appear to be drawn to this student.

2. **Intrapersonal Intelligence:** Such people display a strong sense of independence, i.e., “Having a strong character or will,” have a realistic sense of personal strengths and weaknesses — knows about strengths and weaknesses of one’s own self, does well when left alone to play or study, often prefers to work, play or study alone, can be described as “marching to the beat of a different drummer” — this may apply to style of dress, mannerisms, of living or learning, has a special interest or hobby that he/she doesn’t talk much about. Also has a good sense of self-direction — is often intrinsically motivated, accurately expresses how he/she is feeling, one is able to be introspective and reflective about personal actions and learns from his/her failures and successes in life, have high self-esteem and a strong sense of self-worth.

**Note:** These categories are not mutually exclusive; individuals may have strengths in both areas.

**Defining Emotional Intelligence**

- Knowing one’s emotions—Self-awareness is the key stone to emotional intelligence. This area features ability to monitor feelings from moment to moment as they happen.
- Managing emotions—This domain refers to the ability to handle emotions in appropriate manners.
- Motivating oneself—Concentrating one’s emotions on the achievement of goals within the context of mastery, paying attention and creativity falls into this category.
- Recognising emotions in others—Empathy is an essential “people skill.”
- Handling relationships—Skills in this domain refer to the abilities common in people who are adept at managing the emotions and their interactions with others.

Gardner’s studies have given description of the personal intelligence for insight into the play of emotions and the mastery in managing them. He and his colleagues did not pursue in great detail the role of feelings in these intelligences, they focused more on the cognition than about the feeling. On the contrary Goleman was of the opinion that IQ and emotional intelligence are not opposing competencies, but rather they represent different aspects and that different people have varying degrees of types of intelligence. Goleman expanded the
work of Gardner to give more comprehensive view of intelligence pointing out that different people have aspects of each domain to varying degrees, combinations and intensities. People adept in one domain of emotional intelligence might not necessarily excel in another domain. Goldman’s discussions give an added dimension to the concentrations on the importance of personal intelligences. His thoughts and ideas help elaborate and explain the importance and dimensions of the personal intelligences as they are extended and redefined as components of emotional intelligence.

Literature Review

As a result of the growing acknowledgement of professionals for the importance and relevance of emotions to work outcome, the research on the topic continued to gain momentum. The publication of Daniel Goleman’s best-seller ‘Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ’ popularised the term Emotional intelligence. Gibbs (1995) in time magazine article highlighted Goleman’s book and was the first in a string of mainstream media interest in EI.

Salovey and Mayer (1993) coined the term emotional intelligence and defined it as the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth. They defined emotional intelligence as the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and emotions to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions.

Cooper and Sawaf (1997) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to sense, understand and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy, information, connection and influence.

Drawing on these definitions it can be concluded that emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotions, the ability to access and generate feeling and they facilitate thoughts, the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge and intellectual growth. Emotional intelligence is a social intelligence which involves evaluating one’s own and others emotions and then using this information to guide one’s thinking and actions. Success in any role is therefore, a reflection not only of technical capabilities but also of selected behavioral characteristics. Self-awareness, empathy, self-motivation, emotional stability, managing relations, self-development, value orientation are some of the integral factors of emotional intelligence.

Gender and Emotional Intelligence

Research also shows that men and women with varying emotional intelligence level’s exhibit different personality traits. Men who are high in emotional intelligence are socially poised, outgoing and cheerful, not prone to fearless or worried rumination, having noticeable
capacity for commitment to people or causes, for taking responsibility, for ethical outlook and are sympathetic and caring in their relationships. Their emotional life is rich, but appropriate; they are comfortable with themselves, others, and the social universe they live in.

Emotionally intelligent women tend to be assertive and express their feelings directly, and to feel positive about themselves; life holds meaning for them. Like the men, they are outgoing and gregarious, and express their feelings appropriately and adapt well to stress. Their social poise lets them easily reach out to new people; they are comfortable enough with themselves to be playful, spontaneous, and open to sensual experience. Unlike the women purely high in IQ, they rarely feel anxious or guilty, or sink into rumination.

The Consortium for Research in Emotional Intelligence in Organisations (2000) has reported that men and women as groups tend to have a shared gender specific profile of strong and weak points. An analysis of emotional intelligence in thousands of men and women reveal that women on an average were more aware of their emotions and showed more empathy and were adept interpersonally. Men on the other hand were more self-confident and optimistic, and adapted more easily and handled stress better. Though men and women high on emotional intelligence exhibit different personality traits, still it is considered to be one the predictors of success, skill, knowledge and experience but it is gaining popularity in the present organisational world because of its predictive validity towards success/ performance as per the research done in the area.

Emotional Intelligence and Success in Organisations

Numerous studies conducted in the recent past have indicated the supremacy of emotional intelligence over the intellectual credentials for success in a profession.

Cortina et al. (1992) have pointed out that the validity of neuroticism for police performance is not surprisingly due to potential stressors associated with policing. Emotionally stable officers should be able to cope better with the range of potential stressors.

Derman (1999) attempted to find the relationship between the emotional intelligence and success in the family business. The study examined whether the relationship between EQ and business success or failure is determined by the mean EQ of the management team. It also investigated whether an individual manager with a minimum EQ has a negative effect on the success of a business that cannot be overcome by the higher mean EQ of the management team. There was a high and significant correlation between EQ and business success. The mean EQ of the entire team and not of the managers EQ, was found to influence the success or failure of the business.

Clarke & Chapman (2000) in a study recognised the interdependence between stress and emotions. The results of the study conducted on police officers indicated strong correlation between each of the five EQ abilities (self-awareness, managing emotions, self-motivation, relating to others and emotional mentoring) and lower levels of stress, emotion management
showing the strongest relationship. In essence the study revealed that these front line police officers who were able to understand and manage their emotions, reported lower levels of stress and were, according to their reported lifestyles, at risk of suffering from stress in the future.

In a study conducted by Mathew & Ziegner (2001) also suggested that successful coping with stressful encounters is central to emotional intelligence. Organisations suffer and incur losses because of low EQ of its employees and some such losses as outlined by Singh (2003) are: The reasons for losing customers and clients are 70 per cent EQ-related (e.g., didn’t like that company’s customer service), 50 per cent of time wasted in business is due to lack of trust. Workers with high work pressures and poor time management skills are twice as likely to miss work; employees who have strong self-management skills cope better with work pressures. Singh also concluded that the most effective leaders in the US Navy were warmer, more outgoing, emotionally expressive, dramatic, and sociable.

In another research carried out by Singh (2003) in India to test the hypothesis that different professions may exhibit different levels of emotional intelligence. A cluster of six professions exhibited a high EQ level—teaching, legal, tourism, politics, business/entrepreneurship and police. This meant that the professions in this cluster are homogeneous in nature and show a kind of commonality. To be ‘successful’ in any of these professions, one needs a high EQ level.

Blum & Polisar (2004) noted, “Training police officers to effectively manage stress & exposure events will require different methods (i.e., emotional intelligence) and content than have been traditionally applied to police recruits and trainees. Officers must possess adaptive expertise in managing their minds, emotions, and physiological reactions in real time.”

**Goleman’s Model and Managerial Performance**

The most popular model introduced by Daniel Goleman focused on EI as a wide array of competencies and skills that drive managerial performance. In working with Emotional Intelligence, Goleman (1998) explored the function of EI on the job, and claimed it the strongest predictor of success in the workplace, with more recent worldwide confirmation of these findings. The Emotional competencies defined by Goleman are the learned capabilities that must be worked on and developed to achieve outstanding performance. The individuals are born with a general emotional intelligence that determines their potential for learning emotional competencies.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

Clearly, the research conducted in the field of emotional intelligence indicates that along with the high intelligence quotient, emotional intelligence plays an equal if not higher role in the well-being of a person in general and performance at work place in particular. Cognitive
capacities (IQ) and emotional intelligence are not competing traits but rather complement in polishing a human being in general. Emotional intelligence being a learnt capacity/trait leaves scope for enhancing human capacities with experience and training, which is not so in case of intelligence since it is largely a trait which has more genetic endowment.

REFERENCES