IMPACT OF SELF-TALK AND PERSONALITY ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to study the impact of self-talk, and different traits of personality on empathy. Self-talk is a way of describing all the things we say to ourselves all day long as we confront obstacles, make decisions, and resolve problems. Self-talk of a person determines his self-esteem in a positive or negative way which in turn affects his behaviour. A trait is a temporally stable, cross-situational individual difference. Emotional intelligence is the ability of an individual to appropriately and successfully respond to a vast variety of emotional stimuli being elicited from the inner self and immediate environment. To measure self-talk, self-talk inventory, for the traits of personality, big-five personality test, and for emotional intelligence, the assessing emotions scale were used. This study was conducted on the students of post graduate classes of different faculties of Dr. H.S. Gour University. Multiple regression was done by using SPSS – 17. In the correlation matrix positive conscientiousness and agreeableness are significantly correlated with emotional intelligence. All the predictor variables together are responsible for only 2% of the variance in emotional-intelligence. Conscientiousness and agreeableness are the strongest predictors among all.

Keywords: Self-Talk, Personality Traits Emotional-Intelligence.

INTRODUCTION

Since 1990, Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer have been the leading researchers on emotional intelligence. In their influential article “Emotional...
Intelligence,” they defined emotional intelligence as, “the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (1990).

Salovey and Mayer proposed a model that identified four different factors of emotional intelligence: the perception of emotion, the ability reason using emotions, the ability to understand emotion and the ability to manage emotions.

1. **Perceiving Emotions**: The first step in understanding emotions is to accurately perceive them. In many cases, this might involve understanding nonverbal signals such as body language and facial expressions.

2. **Reasoning with Emotions**: The next step involves using emotions to promote thinking and cognitive activity. Emotions help prioritize what a person pay attention and react to; a person responds emotionally to things that garner his attention.

3. **Understanding Emotions**: The emotions that a person perceives can carry a wide variety of meanings. If someone is expressing angry emotions, the observer must interpret the cause of their anger and what it might mean. For example, if the boss is acting angry, it might mean that he is dissatisfied with the work; or it could be because he got a speeding ticket on his way to work that morning or that he’s been fighting with his wife.

4. **Managing Emotions**: The ability to manage emotions effectively is a key part of emotional intelligence. Regulating emotions, responding appropriately and responding to the emotions of others are all important aspect of emotional management.

According to Salovey and Mayer, the four branches of their model are, “arranged from more basic psychological processes to higher, more psychologically integrated processes. For example, the lowest level branch concerns the (relatively) simple abilities of perceiving and expressing emotion. In contrast, the highest level branch concerns the conscious, reflective regulation of emotion (1997).

The good news about emotional intelligence is that, unlike IQ, it can be improved throughout life. In a serendipitous fashion, life offers innumerable chances to tone a person’s emotional competence. In the normal course of a lifetime, EI tends to increase as you learn to be more aware of your moods, to effectively handle distressing emotions, to listen and empathise. In short, as a person become more mature (Singh, D. 2003). Men and women are equal in their ability to increase emotional intelligence. While women tend to be stronger in competencies based on empathy and social skills, men do better in those based on self-regulation.
Self-talk is defined as cognitive products that reflect what people tell themselves. According to Pascal “Man is an intimate dialogue” (Marina, 2005). Within a person, he transmits information and orders and also ask questions. In most cases, thoughts take the form of internal self-talk to oneself, although cognitions also take such forms as the imagination, affective information and tacit knowledge (Schwartz, 1997).

Joseph (2009) identifies “self-talk as being the things a person says about themselves when faced with problems, difficulties or challenges”. Self-Talk or Inner speech is a characteristic of human kind (Fields, 2002). Thoughts in the form of inner conversation deluge a person’s mind and cognitive theorists have long emphasized the link between what a person says to himself and how he behaves, suggesting that a person’s thinking can affect emotional and behavioural outcomes (Ellis, 1994; Meichenbaum, 1977). Meichenbaum (1977) viewed self-statements as indices of individual’s beliefs which may play a mediational role in behavioural performance.

Self-talk is a way of describing all the things one says to himself all day long as he confronts obstacles, makes decisions, and resolves problems. Self-talk is not “talking to yourself” in a literal sense, although it sometimes does involve talking out loud (depending on the person). There is a myth, that a person talk to himself, it is a sign of “craziness” or mental illness. That idea stems from the “voices” or auditory hallucinations experienced in severe forms of mental illness, such as schizophrenia. When a person hears voices, he/she thinks it is someone else talking to them. The self-talk described here is not like that at all. Everyone is engaged in self-talk. Usually, it is part of thinking process, or “stream of consciousness.”

Researchers like Martin Seligman have been studying optimists and pessimists for years, and they have found that an optimistic world view carries certain advantages. Language may be the most powerful tool ever invented to influence behaviour. Language directed inward, or “self-talk,” is especially important in performance situations. Sport psychologists describe self-talk as thinking, or making internal or external statements. This dialogue with oneself provides a means of identifying and solving problems by making perceptions and beliefs conscious.

Available research indicates that self-talk can improve attentional control and create positive expectancies. Positive self-talk has also been associated with more successful competitive outcomes whereas negative self-talk is associated with losing and poorer attentional control. It is also helpful in arousal management, competitive pressure management, anger management, elimination of fear and choking, and development of the killer instinct.

According to Brain Traicy (2011), the most powerful influence on a person’s attitude and personality is what he say to himself, and believe. It is not what
happens to him, but how he respond internally to what happens to him, that
determines his thoughts and feelings and ultimately, his actions. By controlling
the inner dialogue, or self-talk, one can begin to assert control over every other
dimension of his life.

One’s self-talk, words that he use to describe what is happening to him and
to discuss how he feels about external events, and determines the quality and
tone of his emotional life. When he sees things positively and constructively and
look for the good in each situation and each person, he has a tendency to remain
naturally positive and optimistic. Optimists develop the habit of talking to
themselves in constructive ways. Whenever they experience an adversity, they
immediately describe it to themselves in such a way that it loses its ability to
trigger negative emotions and feelings of helplessness.

According to Walt Schafer (2004), Negative self-talk is perpetuates
avoidance. Negative self-talk prevents us from solving problems, and can
contribute to a variety of psychological problems, including depression. One
tells himself that a situation such as the freeway is dangerous and so he avoid it.
By continuing to avoid it, he reinforce the thought that it’s dangerous. A person
may even project images of catastrophe around the prospect of confronting the
situation. In short, anxious self-talk leads to avoidance, avoidance begets further
anxious self-talk, and around and around the cycle goes.

Trait is a quality or characteristics mode of behaviour which is consistently
seen in an individual’s behaviour over a long period of time. Cheerful man is
consistently cheerful over a long period of time in varied situations. A trait may
therefore be defined as a particular quality of behaviour which characterizes the
individual in a wide range of his activities and is fairly consistent over a period
of time. A trait of personality means such a distinctive character of a person’s
thoughts, feelings and actions as market him off from other persons. The
cluster of characteristics is a trait.

Trait psychology considers personality traits as the primary point of focus
in defining personality and views human nature in terms of individual differences.
As in any of the theoretical orientations, there are numerous theories and trait
systems within trait psychology which attempt to explain personality. The Bigive model provides an empirical generalization of the co-variation of personality
traits.

Depape et al (2006) studied Self-Talk and Emotional Intelligence in university
students. The results indicated that year of study and self-talk were significant
predictors of emotional intelligence and were associated with emotional intelligence
in a positive direction. Contrary to expectation, gender was not a significant
predictor.

Other theorists and researchers (Neubauer & Freudenthaler, 2005; Petrides
& Furnham, 2001, 2003) have argued that emotional intelligence can be usefully
conceptualised as typical (or trait) functioning. A trait approach to assessing emotional intelligence draws on self or other reports to gather information regarding the display of emotional intelligence characteristics in daily life. Even though some literature presents ability and trait conceptualisations of emotional intelligence as mutually exclusive alternatives (e.g., Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000), we believe that both are important and complementary dimensions of adaptive emotional functioning.

Numerous studies have explored how scores on the Assessing Emotions Scale are associated with outcomes one might expect to be related to emotional intelligence. Such outcomes are found in various life realms including mental health, employment, and academic pursuits. Examples of early findings include that Assessing Emotions Scale scores related to more optimism, greater impulse control, lack of depressed affect (Schutte et al., 1998), more empathic perspective taking, greater self-monitoring in social situations, more closeness and warmth in relationships, and greater marital satisfaction (Schutte et al., 2001). Further, scale scores predicted better mood repair after a negative mood induction (Schutte, Malouff, Simunek, McKenley & Hollander, 2002). From the above discussion, it is obvious that there is strong association between self-talk and emotional intelligence. But still there are lots of potential to study the association between personality traits and emotional intelligence.

**Objective**

The main objective is to find out the power of prediction of self-talk and personality traits on emotional intelligence.

**Hypotheses**

- There will be positive correlation between positive self-talk and emotional intelligence.
- There will be negative correlation between negative self-talk and emotional intelligence.
- There will be positive correlation between personality traits (extroversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness) and emotional intelligence.
- There will be negative correlation between neuroticism and emotional intelligence.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Sample**

A sample of 262 Subjects was drawn from students of P.G. courses from different Colleges/ University Teaching Departments. The age group was taken between twenty two to thirty, as it is considered that mostly students in this age group pursues P.G. courses.
Sampling

Convenience sampling, a type of non-probability sampling method is used in the study. A convenience sample is a matter of taking what a researcher can get. Volunteers would constitute a convenience sample.

Study Design

This study aims at to predict the co-relational relationship between the given variables. Hence different types of self-talk (negative and positive) and different traits of personality as measured by NEO-FFI were used as predictor variables and Self-Esteem was taken as outcome variables. Here variables were measured simultaneously and none of them were manipulated.

Statistical Techniques Used

In this study, multiple regression was performed on SPSS-17. For this study, Backward method was adopted for linear multiple regression. In Backward selection, SPSS enters all the predictor variables into the model. The weakest predictor variable is then removed and the regression re-calculated. If this significantly weakens the model then the predictor variable is re-entered – otherwise it is deleted. This procedure is then repeated until only useful predictor variables remain in the model. In multiple regression there is no direct manipulation of the variables but instead just measure the natural occurring levels of the variables and see if this helps in predicting the score on the D.V.

Measures

- **Self-Talk Inventory**: It was constructed by Ester Calvete and Olga Cardenoso (University of Deusto) in 2002. This inventory includes two different scales: Negative self-talk scale and Positive self-talk scale. It consists of ten imaginary situations using a 4-point response formatted scale (1 = not very probable, 2 = somewhat probable, 3 = quite probable, 4 = very probable).

- **The Assessing Emotions Scale**: was developed by Nicola S. Schutte, John M. Malouff and Navjot Bhullar. It is a 33-item self-report inventory focusing on typical emotional intelligence. Respondents rate themselves on the items using a five-point scale. Respondents require on average five minutes to complete the scale. Total scale scores are calculated by reverse coding items 5, 28 and 33, and then summing all items. Scores can range from 33 to 165, with higher scores indicating more characteristic emotional intelligence.

- **NEO-PI-R**: This test was developed by Paul T. Costa and Robert R. McCrae in 1985. It is a concise measure of the five major dimensions, or domains, of personality and some of the more important traits or facets that define each domain. Together, the five domain scales
(extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness and conscientiousness) and thirty facet scales of the test allow a comprehensive assessment of adult personality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the table 1, mean, S. D. and correlational matrix is presented. Correlational matrix shows significant relationship in bold numbers between the variables. It can be observed that positive self-talk is significantly correlated with empathy \((i.e. r = .156, p < .05)\) and neuroticism (Neuro.) is negatively correlated with empathy \((i.e. r = -.075, p < .00)\). Agreeableness (Agree) is significantly correlated with empathy \((i.e. r = .222, p < .00)\) while remaining three personality traits \(i.e.\) Extraversion (Extro.), Openness (Open.) and Conscientiousness (Cons.) are not showing any significant relationship with empathy. Besides, the table is showing correlation between Self-Talk and Personality traits. Except neuroticism, self-talk is showing correlation with all other traits of personality.

TABLE 1
Mean, S.D. and Inter-Correlational matrix (Pearson Correlation) of all the variables.

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. S-t neg.</td>
<td>44.40</td>
<td>14.42</td>
<td>-.045</td>
<td>-.049</td>
<td>-.092</td>
<td>-.166**</td>
<td>-.222**</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>-.067</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. S-t pos.</td>
<td>70.43</td>
<td>14.44</td>
<td>-.068</td>
<td>.123*</td>
<td>-.177**</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.140*</td>
<td>.093</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Neuro.</td>
<td>24.87</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>.172**</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>-.137*</td>
<td>-.222**</td>
<td>-.060</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Extro.</td>
<td>30.32</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>-.123*</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.025</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Open.</td>
<td>26.20</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>.172**</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>-.137*</td>
<td>-.222**</td>
<td>-.060</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Agree.</td>
<td>26.83</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>-.123*</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.025</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Cons.</td>
<td>33.35</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>.172**</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>-.137*</td>
<td>-.222**</td>
<td>-.060</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. E. I.</td>
<td>128.46</td>
<td>13.78</td>
<td>.172**</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>-.137*</td>
<td>-.222**</td>
<td>-.060</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

*\(p < .05\). **\(p < .001\).

Scatter plots were also drawn between all the possible combinations of P.Vs. and O.Vs. The red line in the graphs shows regression line or the line of fit. The partial dotted line represents the non-linear regression line, a bend in regression line. It’s uncommon in behavioural science but here it’s used to make better understanding and prediction between the variables.
In the graph 1, the line has mild negative slope and the partial dotted line is covered by regression line which denies any possibility of non-linear relationship. The scores are scattered in the left side of the graph pointing towards weak relationship. Outliers are also present.

In the graph 2, there may be a linear relationship between agreeableness and Emotional Expression and Regulation. Here the regression line has mild slope.
moving upward showing a positive trend. The partial dotted line showing possibility of non-linear relationship. Scattered scores are showing weak relationship. Some outliers are also present.

**Figure 3: Scatterplot between Emotional Expression and Regulation and Openness.**

The graph 3 is showing almost a straight line showing no relationship between the variables. The scores are scattered all over the graph showing weak relationship.

**Figure 4: Scatterplot between Emotional Expression and Regulation and Extraversion.**

The graph 4 is showing a non-linear trend as the red line is straight and the partial dotted line has a deep bend.
Figure 5: Scatterplot between Emotional Expression and Regulation and Positive Self-Talk.

In the graph 5, there may be a linear relationship between Positive Self-Talk and Emotional Expression and Regulation. There is no bend in the partial dotted line. The mild slope of red line points towards a positive trend between Positive Self-Talk and Emotional Health. The scattered scores shows weak relationship and some outliers are also present.

Figure 6: Scatterplot between Emotional Expression and Regulation and Neuroticism.

In the graph 6, there may be a linear relationship between Neuroticism and Emotional Expression and Regulation. The mild downward slope is pointing
negative trend between the variables. Scattered scores are showing weak relationship. May be some outliers are also present.

In the graph 7, there may be a linear relationship between Conscientiousness and Emotional Expression and Regulation. The upward slope presents a positive trend between the variables. Scattered scores are showing weak relationship. Some outliers, may be present.

Here, the regression equation comprising all the variables is:

\[ Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7. \]

Here, \( Y \) is Emotional intelligence, \( \beta_0 \) is constant, \( X_1 \) is negative self-talk, \( X_2 \) is positive self-talk, \( X_3 \) is neuroticism, \( X_4 \) is extroversion, \( X_5 \) is openness, \( X_6 \) is agreeableness and \( X_7 \) is conscientiousness.

In the table 2, model produced adjusted \( R^2 = 0.022 \). Only 2% of the variability in emotional intelligences accounted by the variables in the model. Here very less amount of variability is explained by this model. Whereas adjusted \( R^2 \) square after excluding weak predictors the variance increases up to 3%. Excluding weak variables strengthens the relationship. It means that agreeableness and conscientiousness are the strongest predictors in the model. Extraversion found to be the weakest variable in the model. This concludes that extraverts are not emotionally expressive and regulated than others.

In this study, self-talk is not having any impact on emotional intelligence. Among personality traits agreeableness and conscientiousness is having impact. They may have better expression and regulation of emotion than others. Also, the \( F \) value was not significant when all variables were included.
## TABLE 2:
Summary of Regression Analysis Testing the Association between
Self–Talk Subscales and Big Five Personality Traits (Predictor Variables)
and Emotional Intelligence (Outcome Variable).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Analysis including all the predictors</th>
<th>Analysis excluding weakest predictors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted $R^2 = .022$, $F = 1.83^{NS}$</td>
<td>Adjusted $R^2 = .030$, $F = 4.98^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>102.93</td>
<td>12.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-t neg.</td>
<td>−.031</td>
<td>.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-t pos.</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuro.</td>
<td>−.049</td>
<td>.162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extr.</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Open.</td>
<td>.193</td>
<td>.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree.</td>
<td>.243</td>
<td>.173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cons.</td>
<td>.310</td>
<td>.157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05.  **p < .00. NS = Not Significant.

It seems that there is no impact of negative or positive thoughts on emotional intelligence. A person is equally able to regulate and express his emotions in an adversity situation weather he is having negative or positive affirmations. Conscientious people work towards goals in a disciplined, dependable fashion. He proceeds in a linear, sequential manner, with a strong will to achieve. He typically consolidates his time, energy and resources in pursuit of his goals.

Negative or positive self-talk is not showing any significant relationship with emotional intelligence. Previous researches quoted that self-talk impacts performance, motivation, emotions and their regulations. But the findings of the present study are not in consonance with previous studies. In this sample self-talk is acting differently. Also, it is a matter of future research that how people cognise emotional intelligence in Indian culture.

### Findings
- No significant relationship has been found between either type of self-talk and emotional intelligence.
- Significant positive relationship has been found between personality traits (conscientiousness and agreeableness) and emotional intelligence.
- Openness, Neuroticism and Extraversion seems to be the weakest variables in predicting the emotional intelligence.

### Limitations
- Convenience sampling may have caused selection bias. Systematic random sampling may be used for recruiting study samples in future researches to avoid nay selection bias.
• In addition to the quantitative method, in-depth qualitative research may also be used to have more precise and informative answers to the research question.

REFERENCES


