Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to introduce the readers to understand the meaning (and its factors) of emotional intelligence which consists of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Psychologists, who conduct research in this field believe, that emotional intelligence is important for human daily life as it helps the people to be successful in doing all activities, such as learning and working. Thus, psychologists try to create tests to measure human emotional intelligence. They are presented via the website, in the form of rating scales through statement items and simulated situations to check EQ scores.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, awareness of emotions, managing emotions, self-motivation, empathy, handling relationships, optimism.

Introduction

For most of the last century, scientists have acknowledged the hardware of the brain and the software of the mind. Cognitive theory cannot simply explain the questions we wonder about most, for example:

♦ Why some people just seem to have a gift for living well
♦ Why the smartest kid in the class will probably not end up the richest
♦ Why some people remain buoyant in the face of troubles that would sink a less resilient soul.
♦ What qualities of the mind or spirit, in short, determine who succeeds?

The phrase “emotional intelligence” was coined in 1990 by a Yale psychologist, Peter Salovey, and John Mayer, also a psychologist from the University of New Hampshire (Salovey and Mayer 1990) to describe certain qualities, for example, understanding one’s own feelings, empathy for the feelings of others, and the regulation of emotion in a way that enhances living. Five years later, Goleman (1995) claimed that success in life is more markedly influenced by emotional intelligence than by IQ.

Emotional intelligence refers to a set of capabilities that are separated from IQ but necessary for success in life, in the workplace, in intimate personal relations, and in social interactions. Goleman (1995) has extended the work of Salovey and Mayer (1990) by separating the components of emotional intelligence into: (i) personal component, and (ii) interpersonal component.

Personal Component of Emotional Intelligence

The foundation of emotional intelligence is self-knowledge. It involves an awareness of emotions; or self-awareness, an ability to manage those emotions; or self-regulation, and self-motivation. (Wood and Wood 2000).

Awareness of our own emotions, and recognizing and acknowledging feelings as they happen, are at the very heart of emotional
intelligence. It means being aware not only of our moods, but of thoughts about those moods as well. Those, who are able to monitor their feelings as they arise, are more likely to be able to manage them rather than being ruled by them.

Managing emotions does not mean suppressing them, any more than giving free rein to every feeling and impulse. As Goleman (1998) put it, “The goal is balance, not emotional suppression: every feeling has its value and significance. Thus, to manage emotions is to express them in an appropriate manner and not let them run out of control. For example, if not tempered with reason, uncontrolled anger can lead to rage and violence. People high in emotional intelligence have learned how to regulate their moods and not let anger, boredom, or depression ruin their lives. You manage your emotions when you do something to cheer yourself up, soothe your own hurts, reassure yourself, or otherwise temper an inappropriate or out-of-control emotion.”

Self-motivation refers to strength of emotional self-control that enables a person to get moving and pursue worthy goals, persist at tasks even when frustrated, and resist the temptation to act on impulse.

### Interpersonal Component of Emotional Intelligence

The interpersonal aspects of emotional intelligence are sensitivity to and understanding of others’ emotions or empathy and the ability to handle relationships or social skill.

The ability to empathize, recognize, and understand the motives and emotions of others is the cornerstone of successful interpersonal relations. Empathy, a sensitivity towards the needs and feelings of others, appears to be a higher level of development that springs from self-awareness. If we have no insight into our own emotion, it is unlikely that we will develop sensitivity and understanding of the emotions of others.

One key indicator of the empathy component of emotional intelligence is the ability to read and interpret non-verbal behavior; the gestures, vocal inflections, tones of voices, and facial expressions of others as researchers believe that about 90% of emotional communication is non-verbal.

For most people, hardly anything in life is more important than their relationships; intimate love relationship, family, professional, and work relationships, and relationships with friends. What does emotional intelligence have to do with forming and maintaining successful relationships?

According to Goleman (1995), there are two components of emotional intelligence that are prerequisites for handling relationships: (i) the ability to manage one’s own emotions, and (ii) the empathy, or the ability to perceive, understand, and relate to the emotions of others. These two components combine to produce the ability to respond appropriately to emotions in others. And this, he maintains, is the very center of the art of handling relationships. But he does not mean “handling” in an autocratic, dominating sense. People who handle relationships well, says Goleman, are able to shape encounters “to mobilize and inspire others to thrive in intimate relationships, to persuade and influence, to put others at ease”.

Although it is not one of the five main domains of emotional intelligence identified by Salovey and Mayer (1990), optimism appears to be a component of emotional intelligence. People who are optimistic have a “strong expectation in general things will turn out all right in life”. The most significant aspect of optimism in the context of emotional intelligence is the way in which optimists explain their success and failure. When optimists fail, they attribute their failure to something in the situation that can be changed. Thus, they believe that by trying harder, they can succeed the next time. But when
pessimists fail, they blame themselves and attribute their failure to some personal characteristics or a flaw that cannot be changed.

**Can You Evaluate Your Emotional Intelligence?**

According to the definition, emotional intelligence consists of five parts: self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social-skills. So the psychologists try to set the hallmarks of those representing emotional intelligence as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Hallmarks</th>
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<tr>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
<td>The ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions, and drives, as well as their effect on others.</td>
<td>- Self-confidence&lt;br&gt;- Realistic self-assessment&lt;br&gt;- Self-deprecating sense of humor</td>
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<td>Self-regulation</td>
<td>The ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods. The propensity to suspend judgment - to think before acting.</td>
<td>- Trustworthiness and integrity&lt;br&gt;- Comfort with ambiguity&lt;br&gt;- Openness to change</td>
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<td>Motivation</td>
<td>A passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or status. A propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence.</td>
<td>- Strong drive to achieve optimism, even in the face of failure&lt;br&gt;- Organizational commitment</td>
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<td>Empathy</td>
<td>The ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people&lt;br&gt; Skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions</td>
<td>- Expertise in building and retaining talent&lt;br&gt;- Cross-cultural sensitivity&lt;br&gt;- Service to clients and customers</td>
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<td>Social skill</td>
<td>Proficiency in managing relationships and building networks&lt;br&gt; An ability to find common ground and build rapport</td>
<td>- Effectiveness in leading change&lt;br&gt;- Persuasiveness&lt;br&gt;- Expertise in building and leading terms</td>
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**Emotional Intelligence Test**

Many psychologists are now trying to create an EQ test and the readers can test examples of this EQ through many websites. Most of them are rating scale test. For example, in ‘Emode Electronic Database’ (2000) on emotional intelligence test, one can see the two characteristics of the questionnaires.

The first group of items is statements which represent human feelings where and one has to choose only one choice in decreasing rating scale. The second group of items is simulated situations which are those confronted in daily life. Again one choice is selected.

The examples of items in both groups are as follows:

**Emotionality Test**

I am ashamed about how I look or behave:
- Most of the time
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Almost never

I feel uneasy in situations where I am expected to display affection:
- Most of the time
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Almost never

I feel weird when I hug someone other than my close family:
- Very true
- Mostly true
• Somewhat true
• Mostly not true
• Not true at all
When I see something that I like or want, I can’t get it out of my head until I get it:
• Very true
• Mostly true
• Somewhat true
• Mostly not true
• Not true at all
Although there might be things to improve, I like myself the way I am:
• Strong agree
• Agree
• Partially agree / disagree
• Disagree
• Strongly disagree
When I get frustrated:
• I almost always drop what I am doing and go use my time more productively.
• I usually drop what I am doing and go use my time more productively.
• I sometimes drop what I am doing and go use my time more productively.
• I sometimes persist and finish the task.
• I usually persist and finish the task.
• I almost always persist and finish the task.
• I take a break and then continue the task.
When I need to communicate my positive feelings to someone, I prefer to:
• act it out by doing something nice for the person.
• say it to the person.
• write it to the person.
• tell it to someone else, hoping that the message will get to the right person.
• keep it to myself in order not to spoil the person.
• keep it to myself and hope that the person will notice what a good mood I am in.
• keep it to myself; it s/he really loves/likes me, s/he will know how I feel.

After finishing the test, the computer program will calculate the EQ score and interpret the meaning. Now, the Department of Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health has standardized EQ test that Thai people can receive the service at every mental health center.

Discussion

From the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that emotional intelligence is a type of intelligence that includes: (i) an awareness of one’s own emotions, (ii) an ability to manage one’s own emotions, (iii) the ability to motivate oneself, (iv) empathy, and (v) the ability to handle relationships successfully.

Thus, students must develop their potentialities in every dimension, including physical, spiritual, intellectual, social, and emotion. Some psychologists went further and challenged the very idea that emotional skills could or should be taught in any kind of formal classroom way. As Goleman (1995) argued, “Nowhere is the discussion of emotional intelligence more pressing than in schools, where both the stakes and the opportunities seem greatest. Instead of constant crisis intervention, or declarations of war on drug abuse or teen pregnancy or violence, it is time for preventive medicine.”

For increasing people’s emotional intelligence, further studies are needed to confirm that emotional intelligence is very important for human beings and what kind of program should be effective in training of emotional intelligence.

References
