

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: THE BALANCING CUE

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Abstract:

"When anger is burning you from inside out, still you are able to maintain a minute's silence, that will save you from a Lifetime's Displeasure" Lavoza

Emotions are the expressions of the Human Beings expressed through various behavioral patterns. Emotional Intelligence is the ability to identify, understand, use and manage emotions in positive ways to maintain good relations at home and office, communicate effectively, understand the fellow people, overcome challenges and to manage stress effectively. People with high Emotional Intelligence(EI) are able to recognize their own emotional state and the emotional state of others and thus manage their behavior accordingly. High level of Emotional Intelligence helps in many aspects related to the daily life of a person such as inter personal relations, management of stress, effective communication and paves way for a better work life balance and greater success at work. People with high Level of EI are proven to be more successful at workplace because they can manage their emotions and understand the emotions of their colleagues. Such people can resolve conflicts quickly and recover from setbacks with composure. In this backdrop, the authors in the present paper made an effort to study the evolution of Emotional Intelligence and its use as a balancing cue at workplace. It throws light on the meaning and components of Emotional Intelligence and analyses on the use of these components for better management of interpersonal relations and improved organizational environment.

Keywords: Attitudes, Behavior Emotions, Emotional Intelligence, Inter personal Relations

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions. Some researchers suggest that emotional intelligence can be learned and strengthened, while others claim it is an inborn characteristic. Of late, majority of the organizations are focusing on the recruitment of employees based on their Emotional Stability, along with looking after their qualifications, experience and expertise. Today's organizations need go-getters and pleasing personalities as their employees and this emphasizes on the need for a balance personality, which in turn depends on the Emotional Intelligence of a person.

Emotional Intelligence is of recent origin and is still a developing branch of study. Some of the authors and researchers believe that it is closely associated with Human Resource Management and can be studied as a part while certain others argue that it is purely related to psychology. However, the need for Emotional Intelligence is accepted by everyone, and has its significance in the modern organizations.

A Brief History of Emotional Intelligence

- 1985 - Wayne Payne introduces the term emotional intelligence in his doctoral dissertation entitled "A study of emotion: developing emotional intelligence; self-integration; relating to fear, pain and desire (theory, structure of reality, problem-solving, contraction/expansion, tuning in/coming out/letting go)."
- 1987 – In an article published in Mensa Magazine, Keith Beasley uses the term "emotional quotient." It has been suggested that this is the first published use of the term, although Reuven Bar-On claims to have used the term in an unpublished version of his graduate thesis.
- 1990 – Psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer publish their landmark article, "Emotional Intelligence," in the journal *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality*.
- 1995 - The concept of emotional intelligence is popularized after publication of psychologist and New York Times science writer Daniel Goleman's book *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*.

Even though many researchers described the ability to get along with people and having a balance state of mind as social intelligence, 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)

The Four twigs of Emotional Intelligence

Salovey and Mayer proposed a model that identified four different factors of emotional intelligence: the perception of emotion, the ability to 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 we pay attention and react to; we respond emotionally to things that garner our attention.

3. **Understanding Emotions:** The emotions that we perceive 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 your boss is acting angry, it might mean that he is dissatisfied with your 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).

Emotional intelligence consists of four attributes:

- **Self-Awareness** – The person recognizes his/her own emotions and how they affect their thoughts and behavior, know their strengths and weaknesses, and have self-confidence. This helps the person to have better self understanding and also better control on the behavior.
- **Self-Management** – The person is able to control impulsive feelings and behaviors, manage his/her emotions in healthy ways, take initiative, follow through on commitments, and adapt to changing circumstances. This helps in better management of situations and creates a positive image for the person.
- **Social Awareness** – The person can understand the emotions, needs, and concerns of other people, pick up on emotional cues, feel comfortable socially, and recognize the power dynamics in a group or organization. This reduces the communication gap and makes better teams.
- **Relationship Management** – Building Relationships is easy but maintaining and sustaining the Relationships is a difficult task for many. Through Relationship Management, the person comes to know how to develop and maintain good relationships, communicate clearly, inspire and influence others, work well in a team, and manage conflict.

One has to understand that all these variables work together and will not have independent significance if the basic principle of managing emotions is ignored. People who can understand and use these variables together become better managers of self and also will be accepted by the colleagues at work place as well as people in the society.

The relationship between these variables is depicted below.



As per the above depiction, self-awareness helps in self-management and also creates social awareness. For a person self awareness and social awareness are equally important as society is inseparable from the life of any individual. Self management is important for any individual as it leads to better control of his own emotions and better management of self. Self Management and social awareness helps in understanding the environment and focuses on building and managing good teams at work place.

Measuring Emotional Intelligence

"In regard to measuring emotional intelligence – I am a great believer that criterion-report (that is, ability testing) is the only adequate method to employ. Intelligence is an ability, and is directly measured only by having people answer questions and evaluating the correctness of those answers." --John D. Mayer

- **Reuven Bar-On's EQ-i**

A self-report test designed to measure competencies including awareness, stress tolerance, problem solving, and happiness.

According to Bar-On, "Emotional intelligence is an array of non cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures."

- **Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS)**

An ability-based test in which test-takers perform tasks designed to assess their ability to perceive, identify, understand, and utilize emotions.

- **Seligman Attributional Style Questionnaire (SASQ)**

Originally designed as a screening test for the life insurance company Metropolitan Life, the SASQ measures optimism and pessimism.

- **Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI)**

Based on an older instrument known as the Self-Assessment Questionnaire, the ECI involves having people who know the individual offer ratings of that person's abilities on a number of different emotional competencies.

CONCLUSION

Emotions are intense feelings that are directed towards someone or something, and are considered to be critical factors in employee behavior --- Stephen P Robbins. Traditionally, it has, for long, widely acknowledged that emotions and feelings of individual workers have lesser role in work contribution and effective work place management. Since one cannot smell emotions, touch emotions, taste emotions, and measure or quantify emotions, this non-tangible phenomenon got only limited attention from management, at work place. Management considers emotions as too subjective and whimsical phenomenon, which contributes less to productivity and profit. However, before a person becomes an employee, he/she is a human being and this fact should not be neglected at any movement. Organizations have to create an environment and nurture a culture in which the human emotions are respected and conditioned and thus work towards more productivity. Finally, it is the responsibility of the organizations to create a serene place of work that cultivates success.

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