



Emotional intelligence & its implications at work: A study of J&K government employees

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Abstract

'Emotional Intelligence', being a newly emerging concept in the present day world, is fast gaining impetus, especially in the field of work. Realizing the importance of the concept, a training course on the 'Role of Emotional Intelligence at Work place' was conceived and conducted at Jammu & Kashmir Institute of Management, Public Administration & Rural Development, Main Campus, Srinagar, wherein 25 trainee officers, belonging to different departments of the J&K government participated. The observations and EQ test results obtained at the conclusion of the 6-day training course, have been utilized as the basic source of information and data. Besides explaining the concept and its importance, the comparison of the EQs of the respondents before and after the training for the same, has been highlighted in the paper. The paper also throws light on different emotional skills and their relevance for success.

The real abstract of the paper lies in the following words- "There is nothing you can do angry that you can't do better when not angry." That is where Emotional Intelligence plays a part.

Emotional Intelligence explains why despite equal intellectual capacity, training or experience, some people excel while others of the same calibre lag behind.

Keywords: emotional quotient, empathy, emotional skills, cognitive activity, emotional competency, emotional maturity, emotional sensitivity, emotional arousal, emotionally literate, emotional stimuli, communicability of emotions, emotional climate

Introduction

Those days have long passed when it was believed that success at work places depends purely on a person's intelligence level (IQ). With time, the things have changed and so have the credentials of a person's success at work. Now what matters, is the brightness of a person/student outside the classroom when faced with life's difficult moments. Nowadays smartness of a person has superseded the academic intelligence in importance, which implies a different kind of resourcefulness i.e. the Emotional Intelligence (EQ).

Although psychologists have long back realised the importance of emotional and social aspects of intelligence, the people of the developing nations are still stuck up only with the notion of traditional intelligence. The following quotation by Kahn, 1969, illustrates the point- "Psychologists are now prepared to think of further stages of intellectual development, and there is no structural limitation for this such as there is for physical growth. Ideas about emotional growth have never been able to be expressed in precise language, but it seems credible that every relationship with another individual can add something to one's personality. This is part of the process of growing-up which can continue even into the stage of life when we must admit to growing old"¹. In the late 1980s, two American psychologists, Peter Salovey of Yale and John Mayer of the University of New Hampshire, summed up human qualities such as empathy, self-awareness and emotional control. They phrased the term 'emotional intelligence' but it languished in academic obscurity. Then Daniel Goleman (1996) of the New York Times adopted it

and introduced it in his bestseller "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ".

IQ accounts for only about 20% of a person's success in life². The balance can be attributed to 'emotional intelligence' (EQ).

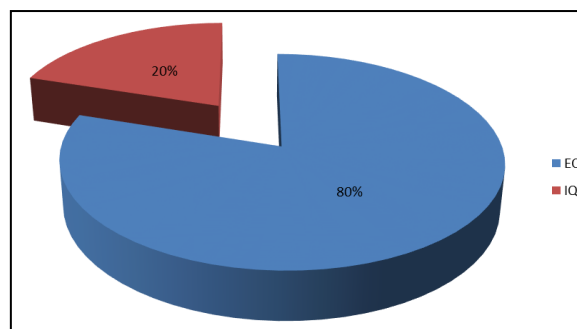


Fig 1

Indicators of a person's success in life

The various components of intelligence, identified by Sternberg³ are:

1. Ability to learn and profit from experience.
2. Ability to think or reason abstractly.
3. Ability to adapt to the vagaries of a changing and uncertain world.
4. Ability to motivate oneself to accomplish expeditiously the tasks one needs to accomplish.

All the above mentioned abilities are inherently related to

'emotions'. Emotions originate from exposure to specific situations. The nature and the intensity of the emotions are usually related to the cognitive activity in the form of the perception of the situation. That perception or thought process results in the experience and/or the expression of a related feeling. Emotions are human being's warning systems that alert them to what is really going on around them. Emotions are our responses to the world around us, and they are created by the combination of our thoughts, feelings and actions, thus making us responsible and accountable for them.

Researchers have found that besides the non-emotional aspects of intelligence i.e. thinking, cognition, intellect, memory and problem solving, the emotional aspect of intelligence i.e. feelings, moods and non-cognition, are equally important. To become emotionally literate is the most important thing, although in developing countries, stress is still laid upon the academic factors rather than on the emotional factors. Basically emotional intelligence is the right mixture of the 'Head' and the 'Heart'.

Every human being has certain emotional needs, which need to be satisfied, starting from childhood⁴. These emotional needs are control, independence, achievement and recognition. For us to realise our full potential, these needs are to be satisfied, so that we can use our abilities to the fullest.

Where do Emotions come from?

Human beings are psychologically very complex. They are not only motivated by reason and intelligence, but are also subject to passions, desires and a range of other feelings which can motivate them strongly- often in a direction different from that of reason. These feelings are the emotions.

Since emotions move humans to do things- they have been compared to the battery or the main spring of the watch, being responsible for its life and activity.

The latest research in Neurobiology has shown that human beings operate from two minds- the rational mind (more recently developed in evolution) and the primitive mind, which is purely the emotional mind. The rational mind, centred in the neo-cortex, the outer part of the brain, developed about a million years ago, allows the humans to plan, learn, remember, love, care and make moral and ethical distinctions. Emotional intelligence is the harmony between the emotional and the rational mind, leading to a richer and fulfilling life. Emotions are thus the reactive impetus; an automatic response depending upon the way you set yourself up to respond and react to the world. It is wrong to term emotions as positive or negative. They are just reactions to specific situations, and not right or wrong.

Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

There are certain emotional skills that we need to master, to become the 'star performers' at our work. These skills correspond to the three dimensions of Emotional Intelligence⁵.

1. Emotional Competency

It constitutes the capacity to tactfully respond to emotional stimuli elicited by various situations. e.g.

1. Tackling emotional upsets.
2. High self-esteem.
3. Ability to enjoy emotions and have self- control.

4. Handling egoism.

2. Emotional Maturity

It constitutes evaluating emotions of oneself and others and thus dealing with the inner self and the immediate environment, e.g.

1. Self- awareness.
2. Developing others.
3. Delaying gratification.
4. Adaptability and flexibility.

3. Emotional Sensibility

It means the characteristics of being peculiarly sensitive and judge the threshold for various types of stimulations, evoking sensations, feelings and emotions, e.g.

1. Understanding the threshold of emotional arousal.
2. Empathy.
3. Improving inter-personal relations.
4. Communicability of emotions.

Thus, 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. This motivates an individual to recognize truthfully, interpret honestly and handle tactfully the dynamics of human behaviour.

Higgs and Dulewicz (1999) identified 'motivation' as one of the elements of emotional intelligence⁶. It may be demonstrated by the following behaviours:

1. Consistently focussing on performance.
2. Looking for ways to overcome obstacles to attain goals.
3. Setting challenging goals or encouraging others to set challenging goals.

Findings of the Study

Measurement of the Emotional Quotient (EQ)

Emotional Intelligence needs to be measured so that we know where we need to improve ourselves, to achieve success. Emotional intelligence tests are the standardized tests to measure the different facets or skills of EQ. The tests can measure the 'emotional intelligence'.

Administration of the EQ test

Having conceived and conducted a six days training course on the "Role of Emotional Intelligence at Work Place", for the officers of different government departments and Corporations of J&K, it was, of course, most appropriate to test the EQ of the trainee participants at the onset and at the conclusion of the training course. This way it was possible to check out their EQs and at the same time, compare their EQs before and after the training course. The test has been designed for the Indian population by Dalip Singh (IAS, a senior bureaucrat) and Prof. N. K. Chadha (Psychologist in the Department of Psychology, University of Delhi).

It included 30 psychological questions, to elicit emotional reactions. It was administered on 25 trainee participants and the scores were calculated based on a standardized scoring key. The Emotional Intelligence questionnaire is enclosed as 'Annexure A'. To take the respondents' natural responses, the purpose of the test was not revealed to them, when it was

administered the first time, at the start of the course. The test was fully explained to them in the second phase of its

administration. The scores of the tests are given in the table (1.1) below.

Table 1

S. No	Respondents	Score in the first phase (before the training course)	Score in the second phase (after the training course)
1.	A	455	500
2.	B	525	535
3.	C	455	460
4.	D	475	505
5.	E	470	550
6.	F	470	490
7.	G	450	475
8.	H	520	525
9.	I	420	480
10.	J	330	430
11.	K	470	470
12.	L	515	515
13.	M	465	470
14.	N	365	375
15.	O	480	495
16.	P	310	390
17.	Q	415	430
18.	R	415	455
19.	S	435	470
20.	T	405	450
21.	U	410	475
22.	V	375	425
23.	W	340	380
24.	X	485	490
25.	Y	505	515

Scoring key of the test

Table 2

Score	Interpretation
570 & above	Extremely high EQ
500-560	High EQ
400-499	Moderate EQ
300-399	Low EQ
399 & below	Try some other day

Interpretation of the Scores

The scores of the trainee respondents were added for all the responses and finally tallied against the scoring key, for the

first as well as the second phase of the EQ test, as given in the table below.

Table 3

Score:	Interpretation:	Result in the first phase: No. of respondents / %	Result in the second phase: No. of respondents / %
570 & above	Extremely high	00 / 0%	00 / 0%
500-560	High EQ	04 / 16%	07 / 28%
400-499	Moderate EQ	16 / 64%	15 / 60%
300-399	Low EQ	05 / 20%	03 / 12%
299 & below	Try some other day	00 / 0%	00 / 0%
Total Score		25 / 100%	25 / 100%

It was observed after analysing the scores that out of the total trainee respondents, 16% had high EQ, 64% had moderate EQ and 20% had low EQ, when the test was administered in the first phase at the onset of the training course. The extremes of the EQs were not observed i.e. the score of very high EQ and very low EQ was 0% each. This score proved that maximum people working in different offices i.e. 64% have moderate

EQ. Although not many officers i.e. only 16% of them had high EQs, but nevertheless it proved that there was scope for improvement. There were many social and personal factors responsible for the 20% officers having low EQs. After the 6 days training course on 'Role of Emotional Intelligence at Work place', when the test was administered again in the second phase, there was observed a considerable

improvement in the score percentages. This shift was from the low and moderate EQs to high EQs. It was observed that 28% (initially 16%) officers had high EQs, while only 12% (initially 20%) officers had low EQs. The remaining 60% (initially 64%) officers were observed to have moderate EQs. Again no scores were observed for very high or very low EQs, thus ruling out the extreme scores.

Conclusion of the Study

After administering the EQ test in two phases, and analysing the two scores, it was realised that a considerable positive shift in the scores had been achieved, by making an effort in the form of a 5 days training course. There was still scope for a lot of improvement and we could still move very high on the scale of the EQ tests, with considerable efforts. Even at this stage, in any case, we had to mainly worry about the 12% (score after the course) to 20% (score before the course) of the J&K officers, with low EQ scores, who needed considerable work outs to enhance the emotional aspects of their personalities. The officers with high EQs did not need to worry much, as they were already equipped with the key to their success at work. Albeit, the remaining officers with moderate EQs would eventually take care of themselves, given the right kind of surroundings and work conditions. With very little efforts and improvements, they would be able to overcome the obstacles to their success in life. Throughout the administration of the tests, it was observed that the officers who had high EQs, had effective communicative skills too. This shows that to achieve high emotional intelligence, communicating effectively and appropriately is extremely handy and powerful.

We need to basically remember that each of us has feelings and every time each of us needs to deal with the feelings of others, at every step. Thus to be emotional is very much natural, but to be intelligently emotional and/or emotionally intelligent leads to the personal and eventually corporate success.

It is very important to know that different professions require different levels of EQs. e. g. leaders need a higher level of EQ than tennis players. Also, EQ can be developed by upgrading the emotional skills, as you can learn these with passing time. Emotional intelligence is not fixed at birth, and thus is closely related to child development. The people need to develop the right attitudes, perceptions and the ways of tackling with the day to day problems, in general and the work problems, in particular.

There is a need to organize the orientation programmes and training courses for the office personnel to develop their emotional intelligence. There is also an imperative need to recognize and acknowledge the emotional intelligence of a person and give it equal credits if not more credits than the traditional or academic intelligence. Finally, it is the EQ that attributes to a person's success, smartness and enhancement of the personality, as compared to the IQ, which can at the most make a person more brainy and knowledgeable.

Emotional Intelligence can work as an operational key in the private organisations with greater success than in the government organisations, as the environment, infrastructure and the credibility criteria for success, is flexible and best suited for the same, in the private organisations, rather than in

the government organisations.

This shows that generally we find neither too over smart nor too emotionally dumb people at the work places in our society. Maximum of our personnel in various departments had moderate EQ, with a handful having high or low EQs each. The scores, arrived at, do not present a grim picture at all. Rather there seems to be a lot of scope for improvement.

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