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RELATION AND IMPLICATINS AMONG MORAL AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN SELECT SELF FINANCING COLLEGES IN KERALA

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence is the capability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to thoughtfully regulate emotions so as to encourage emotional and intellectual growth. For most people, emotional intelligence (EQ) is more important than one's intelligence (IQ) in attaining success in their lives and careers. As individuals our success and the success of the profession today depend on our ability to read other people's signals and react appropriately to them.

Therefore, each one of us must develop the mature emotional intelligence skills required to better understand, empathize and negotiate with other people — particularly as the economy has become more global. Otherwise, success will elude us in our lives and careers.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify and manage your own emotions and the emotions of others. It is generally said to include three skills: emotional awareness; the ability to harness emotions and apply them to tasks like thinking and problem solving; and the ability to manage emotions, which includes regulating your own emotions and cheering up or calming down other people.

In this model, emotional intelligence is regarded as consisting of four separate components or branches. Here is a summary of this four-branch model of emotional intelligence:

- 1) **Perceiving and Identifying Emotions** - the ability to recognize how you and those around you are feeling.
- 2) **Facilitation of Thought** - the ability to generate emotion, and subsequently reason with this emotion.
- 3) **Understanding Emotions** - the ability to understand complex emotions and emotional "chains", i.e., the transition of emotions transition from one stage to another.
- 4) **Managing Emotions** - the ability which allows you to manage emotions in yourself and in others.

Up to now emotional intelligence has been extensively study in relation to cognitive intelligence and personality traits. What has not been studied enough, however, is the relation between emotional intelligence and moral development. The only studies know the deal with behavioral

Aspects of morality. For example, a positive relation was found between emotional intelligence and altruistic behavior or empathy (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000b). Most of these studies were limited to adult years, mainly due to methodological reasons.

Objective of the study

The aim of the present study is to explore the relations between emotional intelligence and moral thoughts in adolescence. In other words, we investigated the hypothesis that subjects with a better understanding and management of emotions function at higher levels of moral thoughts and judgment.

METHOD

Participants

To pursue the research goal, we tested 248 college students with a paper and pencil questionnaire. All participants were students, aged 18 to 25 years, equally distributed among the UG and PG students in kerala

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colleges. The questionnaire administered to them included two task inputs; one assessed their emotional intelligence and the other their moral thinking.

Assessment of emotional intelligence

In order to measure students' emotional intelligence, a questionnaire was designed based on students' self-reports. Students were asked to rate their ability to perceive, monitor, and manage their own and other people's emotions on a 5-point scale. The range was from 0: "not at all" to 5: "very much so". This test was designed according to Mayer et al.'s theory of emotional ability. For example:

It's easy for me to perceive other people's moods and emotions I am open to criticism without getting defensive

When I get angry or upset, I can easily calm myself down

When I'm under pressure, I usually remain calm and concentrated

Structure of the emotional intelligence questionnaire

To scrutinize the internal structure of the emotional intelligence questionnaire and its construct validity, a factor analysis with the varimax rotation was employed. Five factors were derived from the analysis, explaining the 46,20% of the total variance. The internal consistency of the scale, computed by Cronbach's alpha, was 0.47.

Specifically, as Table 1 shows, 3 items referring to the ability to perceive and identify emotions, of one's self and of others, load the first factor. On the second factor, 3 items load referring to such communication skills, as being meek, sweet-tempered and open to criticism. The third factor is loaded by 4 items, which indicate the ability to manage emotions. Finally, 3 items related to controlling emotions load the fourth factor. It can be viewed that the factors roughly correspond to 3 of the 4 emotional components of the model described by Mayer and colleagues. Mean rates in each of the 4 factors were regarded as indices of emotional intelligence of the students.

Table 1

Factors analysis of the emotional intelligence questionnaire revealed 4 factors, which represent 4 emotional abilities

Factors	Explained variance	Means	S.D.
1. Perceiving Emotions	12,38 %	3,72	,749
2. Communication skills	11,58 %	3,34	,762
3. Managing emotions	11,56 %	3,19	,708
4. Facilitation of thought	10,67 %	3,17	,843

Assessment of moral thought and judgment

For the assessment of moral thought, we designed a series of tasks. In this task 4 stories were presented to the student, each exemplified a moral dilemma in an everyday life context. Students had to rate a number of alternative answers or arguments, following each story. From this series of tasks, 2 measures were obtained. The first aimed at assessing the subjects' level of moral thought and the second was a measure of the socio-moral judgment

RESULTS

Typology of students based on their emotional intelligence

In the next step, cluster analysis was employed as a heuristic approach to identify subtypes of students based on their self-rated emotional abilities. Cluster analysis generates a typology of individuals based on the patterns of

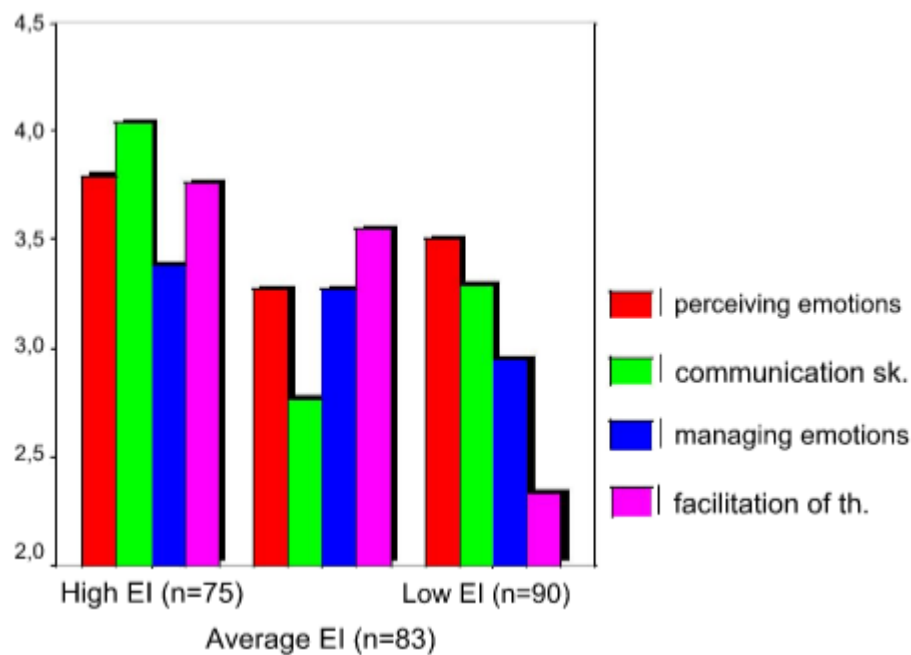
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the predictor variables. Among the different cluster analytic methods, the K-means analysis was employed because it is appropriate with large data collected from more than 200 participants.

The K-means analysis procedure produced a reliable 3 clusters solution, which intended to identify subtypes of students based on their ability to perceive, manage and control their emotions and communication skills. To validate this solution, analysis of variance was employed, indicating that the 3 cluster groups were significantly different in all the above emotional abilities. Accordingly, the profiles of students classified in each cluster can be described in the following way (see Figure 1):

Figure 1

The students' self-rates in the 4 emotional abilities, in relation to their cluster membership



Cluster 1 represented the students of high emotional intelligence. Seventy-five students were classified here. Members of this cluster describe themselves as highly intelligent, as they have scored higher than the others in the four emotional abilities. Specifically, they report they are fairly good at perceiving emotions, of themselves and of others, at communicating and facilitating of thought, while they are moderate at managing their emotions.

Cluster 2 represented the students of average emotional intelligence. The 83 members of this cluster rated themselves moderately in all the emotional abilities tested: perceiving and managing emotions, communication skills and facilitation of thought were assessed almost in the middle of the scale.

Cluster 3 included the students of low emotional intelligence. The 90 members of this cluster report their ability of perceiving emotions as being fairly good developed, while their communication skills and their managing of emotions as being moderate. Finally, the facilitation of thought in this group is rather low.

How does emotional intelligence development relate to moral thinking?

The original aim of this research was to examine the possible relations between emotional intelligence and moral thinking. In other words, to see if students of high emotional intelligence differed in moral thought and judgment from those of a low one. To pursue this goal, we applied a series of analyses of variance to the data. Cluster membership was the dependent variable and the moral thinking measures were the independent ones. Specifically, we ran two analyses: one for the level of moral thought in each of the 4 stories and one for the rates of socio-moral arguments in each story. Figure 2 illustrates the results of the first analysis.

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It was found that the members of the high emotional intelligence cluster attained a higher level of moral thought in all stories, but this effect was not significant. It only implies there is a tendency to that direction and, therefore, it may be worthy of further investigation

Figure 2

The level of moral thought and socio-moral judgment of the students, in relation to their cluster membership

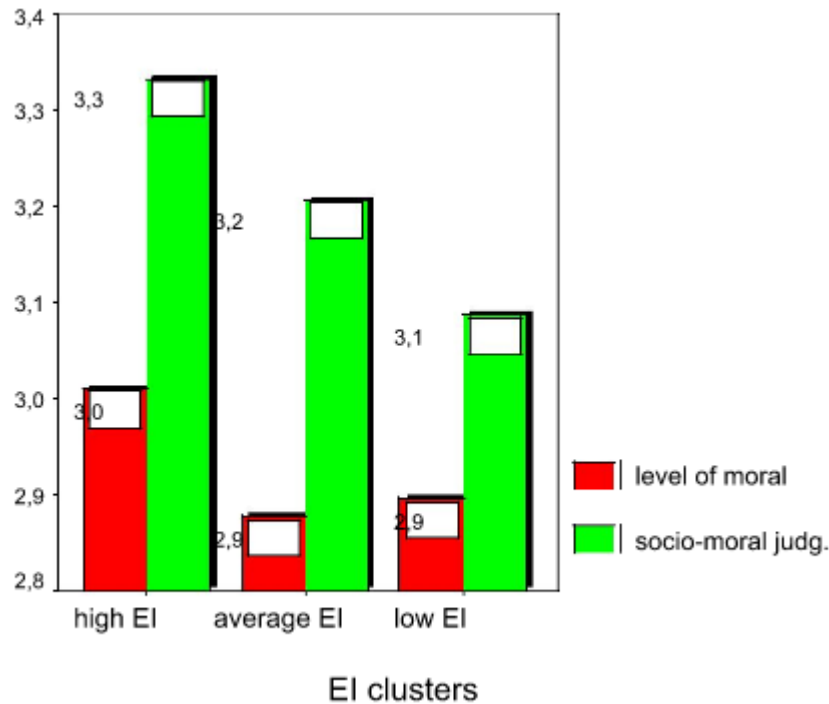


Figure 2 also presents the effects of cluster membership on the second measure of moral thinking, the rating of socio-moral arguments. These results seemed a bit more conclusive. Cluster membership effect was found significant. This indicates that the students of high emotional intelligence had better socio-moral judgment than the students of average and low emotional intelligence. No significant difference was noted between the average and the low EI clusters.

In other words, it seems that the functional level of emotional intelligence is related, to a certain degree, with the development of moral thought in the adolescent years. This relation is more evident with the emotionally mature adolescents who demonstrate higher emotional abilities and moral judgment. However, it is obscured in the immature ones, that is the adolescents of average and low emotional intelligence

This finding supports the aspect of arts and other colleagues, who claim that the development of one's moral thought and judgment reflects the person's level of emotional competence or intelligence. In other words, moral development, as a part of personality, is inextricable from one's emotional abilities and competence. A balanced, well-lived life, characterized by moral integrity, is one that reflects mature emotional competence. Therefore, moral dimensions such as moral commitment, integrity and judgment cannot be disentangled from our socio-emotional experience. Consequently, the interpretation of emotional development would never be satisfactory unless we take moral development into account

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