

The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Self-Esteem

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Abstract: *Emotional intelligence and self-esteem can play very important role in personal and professional success. The present paper attempts at giving a brief overview of important role of emotional intelligence in life and also the relationship it has with self-esteem. The present study is a descriptive one, based on purely secondary sources of data exploring the significance of emotional intelligence in personal and professional aspects and examines its relationship with self-esteem. The literature reveals that individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to show better self-esteem, optimism, and resilience. The findings highlight a positive, reciprocal association between these two constructs, revealing that emotional intelligence contribute immensely in enhancing self-esteem and emotional well-being.*

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, self-esteem, self-awareness

1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence and self-esteem are considered as key role players in every field of life. Emotions play a very important role in the quality of personal as well as professional life of an individual. Emotions are the primary motivating forces that arouse, direct and sustain activity (Stuart & Panquet, 2001) [1]. Emotional intelligence is required to deal effectively with the matters of life. The concept of emotional intelligence is not an old one. The term 'Emotional Intelligence' was first coined by Salovey and Mayer in 1990 and it came into prominence in 1999 when Daniel Goleman's book titled 'Emotional Intelligence' was published [2]. Salovey 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 emotions. Emotional intelligence refers to one's ability to understand, express and control emotions as well as ability to understand, interpret and respond to the emotions of others. It is the ability to perceive, control and evaluate the emotions of oneself as well as of others. Emotional intelligence has been conceptualized in the literature both as a relatively enduring trait and as ability (Mayer et al., 2002; Petrides & Furnham, 2006; Schutte et al., 1998) [3] [4] [5]. Emotional intelligence includes cognition, perception, expression of emotion, emotional facilitation, understanding emotion, management and regulation of emotion in order to improve and develop emotional intelligence. It is stated that emotional intelligence is the application of emotions intelligently; it means applying the emotions intelligently in order to direct the behaviors to achieve better results. At the same time, self-esteem also plays a vital role in the life of an individual. Self-esteem of the same individual cannot be overlooked (Carmeli et al., 2007) [6]. Self-esteem is important as it greatly influences people's choices and decision. Self-esteem refers to one's beliefs about their own worth and value. It has to deal with the feelings people experience that follow from their sense of worthiness and unworthiness. "Self-esteem is appreciation one's own worth, importance and having the character to be accountable for oneself and to act responsibly towards others" (Carmeli et al., 2007). Individual's feelings, thoughts and evaluations of his abilities in social, educational, familial and body image domains are

called "self-esteem", William James (1980), Bednar et al., (1989) states that self-esteem consists of two components: global self-esteem and specific self-esteem, Global self-esteem includes all the things that an individual attributes to himself, such as physical appearance, abilities and material belongings. Specific self-esteem includes all the things that an individual achieves through social relations during their life, and they are exclusively their experiences that he doesn't share with anyone else [7][8].

2. Objectives of the Study

The study is descriptive and is based purely on secondary sources of data. The objectives of the present paper are the following:

- To throw light on the importance of emotional intelligence in a person's life.
- To find out the relationship of emotional intelligence with self-esteem.

3. Methodology

The study uses secondary sources of data and is based on a review of the existing literature.

4. Discussion

4.1 Importance of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence impacts different areas of life. Literatures on emotional intelligence discuss its importance in different spheres of life, such as personal and professional. Practical implications have been examined by different researchers (Carmeli et al., 2007; Mayer, J., 2009). The theoretical proposal of emotional intelligence is that individuals who have high emotional intelligence probably experience more success in professional as well as non-professional aspects of life than individuals with low emotional intelligence. Golman (1996) stated that to excel in life challenges, individuals should develop the emotional intelligence components in themselves [9]. Gardner (1948) divides the emotional dimension of his multi-dimensional intelligence into two general components: "internal capabilities" and "interpersonal skills"[10]. In Bar-on (1997)

opinion, emotional intelligence comprises a set of no cognitive capabilities, qualities and skills which influence an individual's ability to success when facing incidents and environmental stresses and includes components such as emotional self-awareness, self-assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, independence, interpersonal relationship, social responsibility, empathy, problem solving, reality testing, flexibility, stress tolerance, impulse control, happiness and optimism[11]. Emotions have their place and value in the areas of leadership and organization (Sharifah Akmam and Ahmad Shukri, 2006) [12]. Emotions are also factors in the success of the organization for an employee in the process of decision-making; ensure customer loyalty, transparency and open communication, teamwork, strategic renewal, creativity, and more innovative changes (Groves and Vance, 2009) [13]. Human emotions can certainly be traced through assumptions based on facial expression, behavior, and physical movement. Negative emotions such as anger and fear can have a negative impact on an individual's focus on work. Positive aspects of mood are associated with a strong commitment to work and better work performance (Ashkanasy et al., 2002) [14]. Afzaal and Taha (2013) also stressed the importance of finding new channels in human resource management policies more effectively and therefore require a close relationship with a new dimension of organizational affective, such as emotional intelligence among employees [15]. Golman argued that intelligence quotient IQ contributes only about twenty percent to success in life; other contributing factors are emotional intelligence, luck, and social class, though these findings are not based on scientific enquiry. People with high emotional intelligence are more likely to succeed in life than people with low emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). Emotional intelligence is also associated with less depression, the ability to repair mood & greater optimism (Schutte et. al, 1998) [16].

4.2 Components of Emotional Intelligence

To understand the importance of emotional intelligence it is essential to mention the five components of emotional intelligence. Golman (1995) suggests that emotional intelligence comprises of five major components: self-awareness (knowing one's own emotions), self-management (managing one's own emotions), self- motivation, recognizing the emotions of others, and handling relationships. He argues that each of these elements plays an important role in shaping the outcomes that a person experience in life.

- a) **Self-awareness:** Some people are highly aware of their own emotions and recognize them quickly, but some others are not. The implications of such differences are, firstly, to the extent individuals are not aware of their own feelings, they can't make intelligent choices e.g. whom to marry, what job to take, which house or car to buy; secondly, because such person's aren't aware of their emotions, they are often low in expressiveness they can't show their feelings clearly through facial expressions, body language or other cues mostly used to recognize other's feelings (Barker & Barker, 1993) [17]. This can have adverse effects on their interpersonal relationships, because other people find it hard to know how they are feeling or reacting. Therefore, this first

component of emotional intelligence seems to be quite important.

- b) **Self-management:** Managing one's own emotions, to control their nature, intensity, and expression, is very important for our mental health and effective interaction with others. People who are unable to control their emotions, aren't capable of living a happy life. Many a times they are avoided by other people and get difficulties in jobs, promotions, or in having satisfactory relationships.
- c) **Self- motivation:** Motivation is the goading force behind peoples' activities, such as being able to motivate oneself to work long and hard on a task, remaining enthusiastic and optimistic about the outcome, and being able to delay gratification to put off receiving small rewards immediately to get larger one's later on (Shoda, Michel& Peake, 1990). Being high on such skills can indeed contribute to success in many different contexts [18].
- d) **Recognizing and influencing the emotions of others:** Another component of emotional intelligence is the ability to understand others accurately to recognize the mood they are in and what emotions they are experiencing. This skill is valuable in many practical settings. If one can accurately comprehend another person's present mood, it becomes easy for them whether it's the right time to ask him/her for a favor. Again, persons who are skilled at creating strong emotions in others are often highly successful in such fields as sales, marketing, politics etc. They can make other people to feel what they want them to feel.
- e) **Managing relationships:** Some people have more ability for getting along with others; most people who meet these people like them and, as a result, they have many friends and often enjoy high levels of success in their careers. In contrast, others seem to make a mess of virtually all their personal relationships. These differences are another reflection of differences in emotional intelligence, or as some researchers phrase it, differences in interpersonal intelligence (Hatch, 1990) [19].

There are implications for the learners, schools, teachers, and parents also. Emotional intelligence can be thought of as a set of skills that help learners to be successful in school, at work, and in relationships. As a consequence of this, they are more likely to have robust self-esteem and be better placed to cope with disappointments and setbacks to become effective learners, young people get to develop a strong sense of self-worth and confidence in their abilities. They need to learn to take responsibility for their own learning and performance, and demonstrate persistence and resilience in the face of obstacles or setbacks. They must also be able to manage their emotions and help others to do the same. It is less to do with controlling emotions and more with recognizing and understanding the effects of these emotional states and developing coping strategies. Young people must also come to understand that negative feelings can be valuable since they provide personal insights into thoughts, feelings and motivation to learn. The foundations for emotional intelligence, self-esteem, happiness and success in life are laid in childhood and adolescence. Schools and

teachers can play a significant part in helping young people to establish these foundations for themselves.

An individual with higher emotional intelligence is better in the following ways,

- 1) Controlling his own emotions and adapting them to the requirements of the situation.
- 2) Having a better relationship with the people around him.
- 3) Self- understanding and analysis of his own emotions and feelings.
- 4) Having a positive disposition and a balanced way towards life.
- 5) Having good communication skills and leadership qualities.
- 6) Better performer at job with greater job satisfaction.
- 7) Having empathy, psychological well-being, and resilience of mind.

4.3 Relationship of Emotional intelligence and Self-esteem

Literature reveals different explanations to understand this relationship. Literature reveals that there is a distinct difference between the two. Self-esteem is the inner perception people have as being more or less valuable, worthy and powerful in the world and Emotional intelligence is the practice of being aware of, understanding and managing emotional states in both oneself and other people. Self-esteem is important as it greatly influences people's choices and decisions. It serves a motivational function by making it more or less likely that people will take care of themselves and to persistently strive towards fulfillment of personal goals and aspirations. People of low self-esteem don't tend to regard themselves as worthy of happy outcomes or capable of achieving them, and also tend to let important things slide and to be less persistent and resilient in terms of overcoming adversity. The proponents of self-esteem movement regard emotional intelligence as being closely related to the building of self-esteem. It is hard to feel good about oneself if one doesn't know about himself herself well, and can't recognize and manage his/her emotions such as anger, frustrations etc. The more one is able to read his own and other's emotions, the more likely he is to relate effectively with others which leads to building of positive self-esteem (Morris, E. 2002) [20]. Overall self-esteem can decrease or increase by the rate of feeling worthwhile, respectable, competent and internally satisfied (Franken, 2008) [21]. One explanation of the relationship is that self-esteem is increased as a result of favorable social experiences. Emotionally satisfying experiences help in building positive self-esteem.

Emotional information is used to form self-concept and attitudes of oneself over the long term. An individual with higher levels of emotional intelligence is able to reason with and modify emotional information so that, over the long term, a positive overall self-evaluation is formed. Another explanation is that of self-perception theory, which holds that self-esteem stems from perception about one's performance and ability. Emotional intelligence is used to form self-perception.

Regarding the direction of the relationship, available literature indicates a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem, with higher emotional intelligence being associated with positive mood and higher self-esteem (Ciarrochi, Chan & Caputi, 2000; Schutte, Malouff, Simunek, Hollander & McKenley, 2002) [22][23]. The reciprocal relationship between the two has been emphasized by some researchers (Lyubomirsky, 2001; Zeidner et al., 2009; Tugade, Fredrickson, & Barrett, 2004) [24][25][26].

Some researchers also argue that people with high self-esteem are usually motivated to enhance their sense of self-esteem and will therefore behave in more emotionally intelligent ways. They may also tend to present themselves in an unrealistically positive manner than those with low self-esteem individuals, resulting in an overestimation of their self-evaluation of emotional competence (Coetzee, 2005; Sosick & Megerian, 1999) [27] [28]. On the other hand, people with low self-esteem may lack a firm, elaborate self-concept, experience negative feelings about themselves, and find it difficult to present themselves in either a strongly positive or negative fashion. They may behave in a cautious, noncommittal fashion in their self-descriptions which may result in an underestimation of their self-evaluation of their emotional competence (Coetzee, 2005; Sosick & Megerian, 1999; Tice, 1993) [28][29][30].

5. Conclusion

The prominence of emotional intelligence and self-esteem for successful living can't be underestimated. Research studies have given evidence of the close relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem. For a successful and happy living, achieving emotional competencies is essential. There is also scope for furthering the existing knowledge by empirical evidence.

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