SRT Theory and Emotional Intelligence: An Inter-relationship

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Abstract

Emotional Intelligence is, in current times, one of the most discussed concepts in management literature. The effects of Emotional Intelligence on Leadership development are the subject of widespread research interests of management scholars and industry professionals and each new day throws open new perspectives which facilitate our understanding of Emotional Intelligence. The roots of Emotional Intelligence run deep ramifying into varied fields. One of such fields is the Theory of Triguna or the SRT theory. SRT stands for the three Gunas that, according to the Sankhya philosophy are personality traits or qualities present in every person. They are the SattvicGuna, The RajsicGuna and the TamsicGuna.

This paper attempts to establish a connection between the theory of Triguna and the concept of Emotional Intelligence as outlined by Daniel Goleman.

Keywords: *Triguna Theory, Emotional Intelligence, Sankhya Philosophy, Personality*

1.   Introduction

There has been a great deal of interest displayed by the academia and the industry in the field of Emotional Intelligence recently. The topic has been the subject of much discussion and deliberation in the concerned circles especially since its role as a strong predictor of leadership behavior, employee motivation, resilience, organizational performance etc. has been unearthed. Though essentially a 'western' concept the roots of the concept of Emotional Intelligence seem to be in the Indian Ethos and Philosophy. The present paper attempts to establish a connection and correlation between Emotional Intelligence and the Theory of Triguna as elaborated in the philosophy of Samkhya Yoga mentioned in the Holy BhagvadGeeta.

Before we start discussing Emotional Intelligence, it would be a good idea to trace a journey of the evolution of the conceptof emotional intelligence and its related terms. A great deal of confusion exists whether emotional intelligence really qualifies to be called an 'intelligence' or not .Let us first explore the idea of 'intelligence' as mooted by the researchers in the field of psychology.

2. Intelligence – the concept

There seems to be a general agreement amongst the academic community that if a person is able to remember and recall information, is able to discern concepts and their diverse interrelations and is able to discern concepts and their diverse interrelations, he can be considered to be intelligent.

However, there is a lot of divergence in the academic community when it comes to describing the nature and working of the concept of 'intelligence'. One line of thought accepts the presence of a general factor called intelligence but refuses to acknowledge the existence of subtypes of intelligence. Another line of thought views intelligence to be a series of abilities by which certain task accomplishment happens and finally there is yet another, third line of thought that adopts a mixed view contending that intelligence can be understood by both general and specific attributes.

David Wechsler, an early researcher in the field of Intelligence has defined Intelligence as "the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to actpurposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with his environment." (Wechsler, 1958, p.7)

While discussing 'intellective' and 'non-intellective' elements Wechsler emphasized that non-intellective abilities which includes 'affective' and 'conative' abilities are to be necessarily admissible in the area of general intelligence. He writes "...........I have tried to show that in addition to intellective there are also definite non-intellective factors that determine intelligent behavior. If the foregoing observations are correct, it follows that we cannot expect to measure total intelligence until our tests also include some measures of the non-intellective factors [Wechsler, 1943 #316, p. 103).

3. The Mixed Model of Emotional Intelligence:

Attributed to Daniel Goleman, the mixed model of Emotional Intelligence is also known as *the performance based model of EI.* It is understood to have far reaching impact on the organizational effectiveness and performance specifically in forecasting excellence in all types of jobs of different hierarchies assigned to employees in an organization.

According to Daniel Goleman, this model proposes four domains of Emotional Intelligence. They are: Self Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness and Relationship Management.

Fig 1 Goleman's Mixed Model of Emotional Intelligence
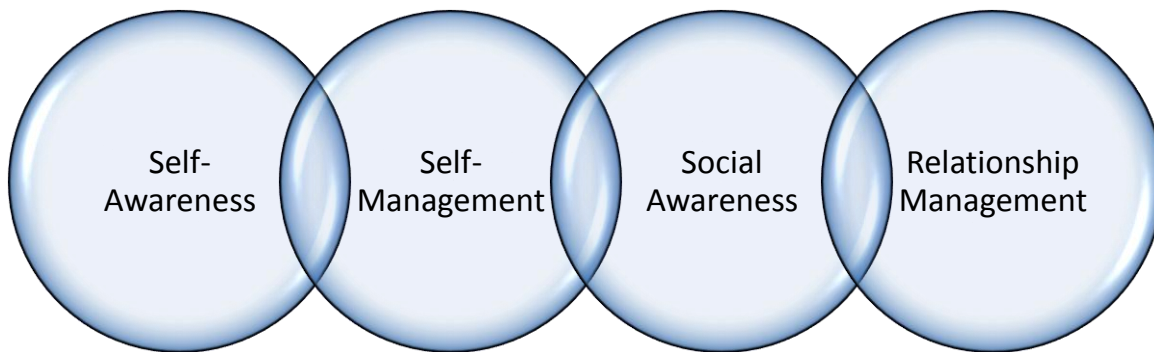
Adaptedfrom:

http://scrc.schoolclimate.org/pdf/Goleman_emotional_intelligence_paradigm_building.pdf (Emotional Intelligence: Issues in Paradigm Building)

Daniel Goleman's mixed model of Emotional Intelligence is frequently referred to as performance model of Emotional Intelligence as it indicates how skills of Self Awareness, Self- Motivation, Social Awareness and Relationship Management if mastered, may manifest as increased organizational performance and resultant success. In simpler words, this model talks in terms of 'competencies' which having been identified through numerous observations, surveys etc. in as many corporations can be termed as performance markers. As per Goleman these competencies can be termed as 'emotional competencies'.

In the words of Goleman, an *emotional competence* is "a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work" (Goleman, 1998b) According to this definition a person who can handle Customer Service and Conflict Management issues in his workplace very well is able to do so because he has an inherent ability to employ his Social Awareness Skills and Relationship Management Skills which are present at an elementary level within him. However he can hone these basic skills further and allow them to develop further as emotional competencies. According to Goleman, an underlying capability is a basic requirement though not an entire requisite to display competence in any of the four EI domain.

Goleman emphasizes that competence in a particular EI domain is the result of not merely presence of the related skill but the refinement and behavioural inclusion that arises out of constant application of those skill to the task at hand. This ultimately has an impact on the way an individual performs his task hence it is referred to as performance model of EI.

Fig. 2. A Framework of Emotional Competencies

	Self Personal Competence	Other Social Competence
Recognition	**Self-Awareness** - Emotional self-awareness - Accurate self-assessment - Self-confidence	**Social Awareness** - Empathy - Service orientation - Organizational awareness
Regulation	**Self-Management** - Self-control - Trustworthiness - Conscientiousness - Adaptability - Achievement drive - Initiative	**Relationship Management** - Developing others - Influence - Communication - Conflict management - Leadership - Change catalyst - Building bonds -Teamwork & collaboration

Source:Boyatzis, R., Goleman, D., and Rhee, K. (2000). Clustering competence in emotional intelligence: Insights from the emotional competence inventory (ECI). In R. Bar-On and J.D.A. Parker (Eds.), Handbook of emotional intelligence. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

The model enumerated in the fig 2 is an improved version of the original model developed by Goleman in 1998.The earlier version comprised of five domains of emotional intelligence and constituted twenty five emotional competencies. Out of the five domains of emotional intelligence in the earlier version, three domains relate to personal competencies viz. Self-Awareness, Self- Regulation and Motivation. They basically relate to the personal or individual skill in identifying and managing emotions within oneself. The other two domains of emotional intelligence in the original version – Empathy and Social Skills- relate to identifying and managing emotions in others. In the later version of this model the five domains were restricted to four (as enumerated in Fig 7.5) and twenty five competencies described in the earlier version were reduced to twenty.(Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 2000).

4. The Theory of Triguna

Despite the dominance of Western line of thought influencing and guiding policies and practices of organizations round the world, the time has come to look towards the Indian system of philosophy if sustainability is to be ensured in the long run. As such there has been a widespread interest in Indian scriptures and books and wisdom contained therein is being drawn upon to create good management practices worldwide. Management concepts are being revised and rewritten in the light of fresher perspectives being offered from Indian scriptures and philosophy.

One such scripture that has been heavily drawn upon is the Holy Gita or the Bhagwad Gita.

The well-known and revered Indian epic, The Mahabharata has also been studied for its contribution to the understanding of human behaviour and dynamics based on which there has been a tool developed (Singh, 1971), while The Bhagavad Gita which is universally acknowledged as a classical text in understanding human personality and psychology by one and all also has been the basis for a good number of tools to be developed to study personality (Das, 1991).The structure, nature and evolution of human personality are elaborated in these sources with special reference to the concept of Triguna.

The term "Trigunas" is composed of two words Tri + Guna. Sankara explains the word gunaSamkhyana (Bhagavad Gita, XVIII, 19) as the system of the Kapila, the subject matter of which is the exposition of the three gunas viz. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. In the Manu-smrti also which is a contemporary with the Mahabharata, there is a detailed description of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas (XII. 24-52) and reference to the three pramanas.Ayurveda has used Prakriti to denote personality (Dwivedi, 2002). Prakriti comes from two Sanskrit roots, "Pra" means the beginning, commencement and source of origin and "Kruthi" means to perform or to form. Therefore, it means 'the initial creation' or alternatively this interesting word can also mean, "To come forth into creation." It represents how one initially comes into life form and further deviations take place (Singh, 2001). The Prakriti remains unchanged during the course of one's lifetime and is genetically determined.

The term personality is derived from the Greek word 'persona', or 'mask', associated with the dramatic masks worn by actors in ancient Greek comedies and tragedies. Ironically today, personality testing is designed to uncover the true personality a job candidate or employee may be masking.

Personality psychology is the scientific discipline that studies the personality system. The discipline seeks to understand a person's major psychological patterns and how those patterns are expressed in an individual's life.

The theoretical expositions on Triguna and their manifestations in human nature have attracted the attention of Indian psychologists. The concept has been examined theoretically (Boss, 1966; Mishra, 2001; Rao, 1962, 1979) .It is model of personality and development of consciousness rooted in concept of Triguna. It is the extent to which the qualities of mind vary (sattva) called as stability; rajas called as activation and tamas called as inertia) help differentiate an individual's mind from the other minds

Conclusion:

The Holy Geeta mentions about a balanced human being in terms of '*Stithipragnya'*. This is very much close to what Goleman says about an emotionally intelligent person. In other words the competencies of an emotionally intelligent person as enumerated by the Goleman Model of Emotional Intelligence are akin to qualities as described in Holy Geeta of a person who can be rightly termed as '*Stithipragnya'*.

According to the Theory of Triguna or the SRT Theory, a preponderance of *Saatvic*(Sattva) element in a person predisposes him towards a balance in his thoughts and resultant actions. Such a person rightfully can be termed as an emotionally intelligent or a '*Stithipragnya*' person.

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