

# Emotional Intelligence: Origins and Theories

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## Abstract

Emotion originates from the Latin verb *emovare*, which implies continually changing and moving (Callahan & McCollum, 2002). Emotions assume a critical part in human natural selection as they influence the way we see and understand our environment. Due to the very important nature of emotions, scientists started studying the abilities and capacities of humans. The theoretical framework in this paper allows us to go deeper into the topic of its origins and related theories (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Spielberger, 2004).

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Origins, Theories, Emotions

**Título:** Inteligencia Emociones: Orígenes y Teorías.

## Resumen

La emoción tiene su origen en el verbo latino *emovare*, que implica estar cambiando y moviéndose continuamente (Callahan & McCollum, 2002). Las emociones juegan un papel fundamental en la selección natural humana ya que influyen en la manera en la que vemos y entendemos nuestro entorno. Debido a la naturaleza tan importante de las emociones, los científicos empezaron a estudiar las habilidades y capacidades de los humanos. El marco teórico de este artículo nos permite profundizar en el tema de sus orígenes y teorías relacionadas (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Spielberger, 2004).

**Palabras clave:** Inteligencia Emocional, Orígenes, Teorías, Emociones.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Emotion originates from the Latin verb *emovare*, which implies continually changing and moving (Callahan & McCollum, 2002). Emotions assume a critical part in human natural selection and adjustment as they influence the way we see our environment, understand it, and respond to that awareness. They assume a key part in the advancement of learning since it is through our subjective emotional world that humans forge their personalities and implications out of reality.

Due to the very important nature of emotions, scientists started studying the abilities and capacities of humans to reason and understand their own emotions, to effectively perceive emotions as well as to regulate and control them (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). They called it emotional intelligence and since then the term has reached almost every corner of the world.

Emotional intelligence has turned out to be progressively mainstream as a measure for distinguishing individuals who are successful in life, and as an instrument for reaching this success. The idea of emotional intelligence clarifies why two individuals of a similar IQ can achieve inconceivably extraordinarily different levels of accomplishment in life (Goleman, 1998) as individuals are in some cases successful not due to their knowledge, but rather because of their capacity to interact with individuals socially and emotionally by utilizing charming temperament in their exchanges (St.Clair, 2004).

Without any doubt, almost everyone's aim in life is related to the achievement and fulfillment of happiness. In order to succeed at this, no matter which area is being developed, emotional intelligence seems to play an important role and should therefore be taken into consideration.

While encumbered by huge asset constraints, military leaders need to make decisions rapidly in conditions described by instability and ambiguity. The Armed Forces needs its leaders to build firm groups, to develop trust, and to cultivate positive atmospheres. Military leaders must create and impart a common vision and set clear mission objectives for the company or unit to be effective responders of the calling and defenders of the country. They have an important duty to guarantee the present and future achievement of the military (Taylor-Clark, 2015). These necessities are less about the

concrete abilities of cognitive intelligence, specialized information, and strategic capability and more about the delicate aptitudes of emotional knowledge that comes into play. The emotionally well-balanced individual will be capable of anticipating misfortune and its effects and, additionally, of suspecting the potential reaction of others to difficulty. This will enable him to react appropriately to obstacles and solve problems rapidly. Emotional intelligence has been suggested therefore as an indispensable asset to be considered in the military as it enables military members to understand their own feelings and also the feelings of others (Sewell, 2011), being more successful at leading the mission to success.

## 2. ORIGINS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The term Emotional Intelligence was reportedly used for the first time by Wayne Payne (1986). He developed the term Emotional Intelligence in his doctoral thesis, "A study of emotion: developing emotional intelligence; self-integration, relating to fear, pain and desire". In his paper, Payne wanted to study and discover the nature and characteristics of emotion and emotional intelligence, to state a "theoretical and philosophical framework" after he discovered that the world was suffering from "emotional ignorance" (p. 23), where many of the problems society was facing were related to emotional states like depression, addiction, fear, pain, etc. He realized that courses where the nature of emotions and emotions themselves were taught did not really exist. His work served as a basis for the next researchers who emerged on this field. Wayne Payne's assertions opened a new area where enormous findings were to be made. In his dissertation, Payne sought to create a guidebook to help individuals develop emotional intelligence as he highlighted in the introduction of his work.

The way he approached emotional intelligence can be summarized in three main areas. The first area targets "raising important issues and questions about emotions". The second area would be "by providing a language and framework to enable us to examine and talk about the issues and questions raised" while the last area was to clarify "concepts, methods and tools for developing emotional intelligence" (Payne, 1986, p. 23). After Payne's work numerous authors decided to develop and study the term further.

Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer, continuing with Wayne Payne's work, used again the term 'Emotional Intelligence' in 1990 when they stated that EI is "a form 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 action" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). They realized that humans need to be able to process their own emotions and the emotions of others. In this way, those who achieved high levels of emotional intelligence could take advantages for themselves and others in many different ways in almost every aspect of life.

However, it was not until 1990, when Daniel Goleman published his book "Emotional Intelligence, why EI matters more than IQ" that the concept of EI became part of society's culture and started to be applied worldwide (Goleman, 1998).

Goleman's aim with his book, as he writes on his website (Goleman, n.d.), was to hear two strangers having a conversation where EI was brought up and they would both know what it meant. As he later recognizes, "little did he know" about the impact EI had. The critical acclaim EI and his book would garner over 5 million copies sold and the book translated to more than 30 languages. But the biggest surprise for Goleman was the "impact it had in the world of business", especially in the areas of "leadership and development" later to be developed in this work (para. 14).

In Goleman's own words, before introducing his work in the market, IQ was established as "the standard of excellence in life" but there he was with a "new way of thinking about the ingredients of life success" (para. 2). The Harvard Business Review (as cited in Goleman, n.d.) defined EI as "one of the most influential business ideas of the decade", being "a ground-breaking, paradigm-shattering idea" (para. 14).

Nowadays, it can be assumed that emotional intelligence has gained relevance in almost every corner of the world. It has raised the interest of many people and researchers who have written many magazines, books, newspaper articles, scientific experiments, etc.. Furthermore, if the words emotional intelligence are entered into Google the searcher finds as many as 17,000,000 (4<sup>th</sup> July 2017) results, which shows how EI forms a fundamental part of today's society.

### 3. CONCEPT AND THEORIES

There are many authors who contributed enormously to studies on EI but due to the extensiveness of this scholarship, only three models will be studied in greater depth. All of them help us understand what EI means (Spielberger, 2004). These three will be:

- Salovey-Mayer's model, which characterizes EI as the capacity to see, comprehend, oversee, and utilize feelings to make thinking easier, assessed by a capacity-based measure.
- Goleman's model, which sees EI as a variety of aptitudes and abilities that drive leadership execution, measured by a multi-rater evaluation.
- Bar-On model, which portrays a cross-segment of interrelated emotional and social capabilities, abilities and facilitators that have an effect on intelligent conduct, measured by self-report.

#### 3.1. Mayer and Salovey's model

Mayer and Salovey, two of the most important figures related to emotional intelligence, define it as

the capacity to reason about emotions, and of emotions to enhance thinking. It includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 10).

In other words, it would be the ability to understand and control our own emotions, the emotions of others and the emotions of groups. Furthermore, Mayer and Salovey also stated that EI includes the ability to be aware and manifest emotions, the capability to achieve and access feelings, the competence to be conscious of "our emotions and emotional knowledge" and the aptitude to manage and control our emotions to exalt "emotional and intellectual growth" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990,p.40).

These two authors suggested a model composed of four main capabilities, which were: "perception, assimilation, understanding and regulations of emotions"(p.10). Emotional perception is described as the ability to distinguish and recognize your own emotions and the emotions of others. Assimilation, on the other hand, is the ability "to generate, use, and feel emotions as necessary to communicate feelings or use them in other cognitive processes" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 11). The third ability, understanding, means that emotional information must be analyzed and understood to know that there are different emotions which can take place at the same time and that they might change over time too. Finally, the regulation of emotions involves the ability to remain open-minded about feelings and to be able to control and manage one's own emotions and the emotions of others. In addition, they stated that in order to accomplish the last ability, the ability to regulate emotions, individuals must have achieved the other 3 abilities. In other words, to succeed in one ability, the precedent abilities need to be mastered before. This is quite logical since if a person is not capable of perceiving his own emotions, he would never be able to understand and even less to regulate them (Fernández-Berrocal & Extremera, 2006).

#### 3.2. Bar-On model

In comparison to Mayer and Salovey's concept of emotional intelligence, a different model appeared in 1997 called Bar-On, which does not singularly associate emotional intelligence to emotions or intelligence. Alternatively, this model demands that EI can also include a broad range of "personality characteristics that might predict the success in professional and everyday domains" (Schulze & Roberts, 2005, p. 40).

The Bar-On model describes EI as "an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures" (p. 40). It tries to look for the answer why some people have better probability of reaching success than others. The model takes another look at EI considering which personal characteristics are the ones related the most to life's accomplishments, dividing these characteristics into five different groups comprising: intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, adaptability, stress management and general mood.

1. Intrapersonal skills are formed by self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-actualization and independence.
2. Interpersonal skills consist of empathy, social responsibility and interpersonal relationships.
3. Adaptability comprises problem solving, social responsibility and interpersonal relationships.
4. Stress management includes stress tolerance and impulse control.
5. General mood covers happiness and optimism (Schulze & Roberts, 2005).

The Bar-On model affirms that emotional intelligence does not only have an emotional part but it also needs to be shaped by a strong social component (it includes interpersonal skills, adaptability and stress management related to social environment). It therefore creates a concept of emotional-social intelligence defined as "a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands" (Bar-On, 2006, p. 14). Without these skills, the human being would not be able to "understand and express oneself" (p. 14), to interact successfully with others and to be able to deal efficaciously with everyday tasks and adversities, to be able to control and monitor our emotions so that the opposite case of emotions controlling them does not take place.

In order to put the Bar-On model into practice, to be able to measure to what extent one individual is emotionally and socially intelligent, the Emotional Quotient Inventory (the EQ-i) was invented. It became "the most widely used measure of emotional-social intelligence to date" (Bar-On, 2006, p. 15). Basically, the EQ-I consists of 133 short phrases with 5 different answers each on a scale from "very seldom or not true for me to very often true or true for me" (Bar-On, 1997, p.17). According to the responses of the individual, the test is able to calculate the EQ-I indicating which of the competencies and skills the person possesses or, more precisely, how developed they actually are. Apart from being able to calculate the EQ-I, this system obtained results which are worth mentioning. First of all, they showed that as humans get older, the EQ-i increases, in other words, we become more and more emotionally and socially intelligent as we grow older. It also worth remarking that the Bar-On model reveals that women are more aware of emotions, show more empathy, have better interpersonal relationships and are more socially responsible than men. On the other hand, men appear to have better self-regard, are more self-reliant, manage stress better, are more flexible, find it easier to overcome problems, and are more optimistic than women (Bar-On, 2006).

### 3.3. Daniel Goleman's model

With the end goal of appreciating an effective and fulfilled life, Daniel Goleman claims that EI is more vital than IQ. Achievement factors incorporate such divergent pointers as being promoted at work and keeping up secure and productive associations with others. Goleman's model suggests that IQ is greatly exaggerated; as one of the chapter headings pithily explains, "when smart is dumb" (Goleman,1998, p.35).

Having acquired a PhD from Harvard University, Daniel Goleman decided to pursue journalism and became a columnist at the New York Times. Amid his twelve years at the NYT he studied the cerebrum and feelings. In the wake of pursuing an article on logic by Mayer and Salovey, he was roused to compose a book that would enjoy literary success: "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ". In the book, Goleman sets out a complete record of EI and its significance to society. His focal proposal is that "emotional illiteracy" is in charge of numerous social indecences including emotional instability, wrongdoing and instructive disappointment. Moreover, individuals at work regularly miss the mark regarding their potential through neglecting to deal with their feelings suitably. Occupation fulfillment and efficiency are undermined by superfluous clashes with colleagues, inability to declare one's authentic needs, and inability to convey one's emotions to others. Goleman approaches the question of insight from all different perspectives (Goleman, 2010).

Goleman's model proposes two key divisions isolating distinctive parts of EI. In the first place those components of EI that allude to individual capabilities are determined (e.g., self-awareness) from those that identify with social competencies (e.g., empathy). Secondly, those aspects of EI that relate to awareness are recognized from those that worry about the administration and direction of emotions. For instance, perceiving that somebody is troubled is unique in relation to having the capacity to brighten the individual up. But then both "reading" feelings and changing feelings usefully identify with the general concept of EI (Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts, 2012).

His first book provided a summary of alluring qualities, including self-confidence, sensitivity, self-awareness, self-control, empathy, optimism and social skills (Paul, 1999):

- **Self-awareness:** The capacity to perceive and comprehend individual dispositions, feelings and their impact on others. It incorporates fearlessness, reasonable self-evaluation, and sense of humor. Self-awareness relies upon one's capacity to screen one's own feeling state and to accurately recognize and name one's feelings.
- **Self-management:** The capacity to control or divert problematic driving forces and temperaments, and the affinity to suspend judgment and to think before acting. Trademarks incorporate reliability and uprightness, comfort with vagueness, and receptiveness to change.
- **Internal motivation:** An enthusiasm to work for intrinsic reasons that go past economic rewards and status - which are outside prizes, for example, an internal vision of what is vital in life, a delight in accomplishing something, interest in taking in. It is a penchant to seek after objectives with vitality and perseverance. Trademarks include a solid drive to accomplish, good faith even notwithstanding disappointment and authoritative responsibility.
- **Empathy:** The capacity to comprehend the emotional makeup of other individuals. It is an ability to understand individuals thanks to their emotional responses and relate to them. Hallmarks incorporate aptitude in building and holding abilities and service to customers and clients.
- **Social skills:** The capability in overseeing connections and building social relationships, and a capacity to discover shared opinion and construct affinity. Signs of social aptitudes comprise viability in driving change, enticement and skill building and driving groups.

Goleman (1998) contends that the qualities recorded are emotional abilities. In that capacity, they might be characterized as learned abilities in light of EI that bring about remarkable execution at work or elsewhere. The definition here underlines the reliance of emotional intelligence on learning. Conversely, psychological hypotheses of intelligence have normally characterized mental capacity as far as aptitude, that is, a preexisting ability to obtain particular mental aptitudes through learning. In this way IQ test scores are ordinarily observed as markers of the individual's potential for obtaining scholastic learning and not simply the learning itself (Jensen, 2005).

On the other hand, Goleman sees emotional intelligence as an arrangement of educated abilities that may result into achievement in different social spaces, for example, the work environment (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2010).

For instance, empathy competence encourages group leaders to comprehend the sentiments of colleagues, prompting more prominent group viability. This same ability encourages the sales representative to bring more deals to a close end by being better at identifying customers' emotional responses to a given item. Then again, emotional unintelligent practices might be profoundly harming to associations. While apparently such a contention might be powerful, more frequently it is: "the primary reason employees leave a company is poor management—people don't quit organizations, they quit managers" (Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts, 2012, p. 269).

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