



Relationship Between Thinking Styles and Emotional Intelligence (EI) of Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions to actions. Thinking styles is defined as specific reasoning and problem solving strategy that goes some way toward explaining why individuals' respond differently to problems that need to be solved and both emotional intelligence and thinking styles involves brain activities. Not much research has been done on this area of exploring the relationship between thinking styles and EI among adolescents. Hence the current study was carried out to investigate the same. In this survey research, the relationship of EI as measured by S.K. Mangal and Shubra Mangal's EI Inventory (MEI) and thinking styles were examined with a sample of college students (N=120) by multi stage sampling technique in the district of Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, India. The mean scores of EI in its four specified domains namely Intrapersonal Awareness, Interpersonal Awareness, Intrapersonal Management and Interpersonal Management was calculated separately. However the total EI score revealed that only 44 percent of the respondents were average and 50 percent with poor EI. The thinking styles of these on its five dimensions namely functions, forms, levels, scope and leanings were also studied. Furthermore, only anarchic style of thinking was found to positively correlate with total EI at 5 per cent significance. Other 11 styles except executive thinking style has a positive correlation value bur not significant. Hence it could be concluded that facilitating change in thinking styles could enhance EI and vice versa

KEYWORDS : – Emotional Intelligence, Thinking Styles, Adolescents

Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) enables an individual to exhibit suitable amount of different emotions such as rage, fear, love, happiness etc proportional to the situations and time and enable them to know about others emotion and react accordingly^[1,2]. It is also important as it helps to enhance self-management as people have many conflicts that arise in their head and heart when making important decisions^[3]. Hence EI has the potential to provide a more complete understanding about the dilemma and to integrate the best thinking about the feelings and the thoughts^[4].

The collated literature deals with emotional intelligence construct as an influence of various success related areas of human life such as leadership qualities, stress coping skills, academic and performance achievement etc., but one basic fact that has been lost in the deeper research is that the thinking styles of human being. Thinking styles is defined as specific reasoning and problem solving strategy that goes some way toward explaining why individuals respond differently to problems, and feelings that need to be solved^[5]. As adolescence is a period of storm and stress that result in one's emotional outbursts, they become more and more vulnerable to emotional pressure which will in turn affect their thinking styles. Hence the current study was carried out to explore the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and thinking styles among selected adolescents with the following objectives.

- to appraise their level of Emotional Intelligence
- to identify their thinking styles of selected adolescents.
- to investigate the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and thinking styles among them.

The study explores the hypothesis that the thinking styles do not have any relationship with the Emotional Intelligence of the selected adolescents and vice versa

Methodology

The present study followed a survey research design to assess emotional intelligence (EI) and its influence on thinking styles of adolescents. As the period of storm and stress gets to its peak in the late adolescence stage, adolescents enrolled in colleges/universities were considered as sample. However, in order to generate the results back to the whole population, the investigator adopted multi stage sampling of four stages with certain inclusion and exclusion criteria. At the end of the fourth stage of multistage sampling four higher education institutions of Coimbatore were identified for the study.

which, k in 20 sampling technique was adopted to identify the sample size of 120 adolescents.

A standardized questionnaire by Mangal and Mangal was used to adjudge the Emotional Intelligence (EI) of the selected sample in four areas namely intrapersonal awareness, interpersonal awareness, intrapersonal management and interpersonal management separately as well as total EI. In order to appraise the thinking styles of these graduates, Mental – Self Government Thinking Styles Inventory developed by Sternberg and Wagner (1992) was modified and administered. This inventory identified 5 different dimensions of thinking styles which are further subdivided into 13 categories of preference. Karlson Pearson coefficient test was done to investigate the relationship between the thinking styles and EI of the selected respondents.

Results and Discussion

The findings were as presented below:

1. Emotional Intelligence of the selected respondents

The mean scores of EI (separately and totally) as procured by the selected sample by means of Mangal and Shubra Mangal EI inventory was categorized and was depicted in Table I.

Table I
Emotional Intelligence mean score categorization of the selected respondents

Domains of Emotional Intelligence	Very Good		Good		Average		Poor		Very poor	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Intra-personal Awareness	0	-	5	4.2	80	66.7	34	28.3	1	8
Inter-personal Awareness	0	-	1	0.8	86	71.7	31	25.8	2	1.7
Intra-personal Management	0	0.0	11	9.2	70	58.3	22	18.3	17	14.2

Interpersonal Management	0	0.0	2	1.7	62	51.7	40	33.3	16	13.3
Total Emotional Intelligence	0	0.0	0	0.0	53	44.2	60	50.0	7	5.8

From the above table we could see that none of the respondents had attained high scores in any of the domains of EI. This might be due to the fact that they are in a transition stage of late adolescence to young adulthood and hence not emotionally intellectual enough.

Looking into the next better category of good EI, again none of them procured its ambit score. However nine and four percent of them were found to be good in their interpersonal management and intra-personal awareness respectively.

Nearly half of the respondents (44%) were found to be average in their EI and exactly 50 percent with a poor EI. The remaining six percent of them obtained a score in the ambit of very poor EI category. Also the respondents falling in the four domains of EI were not to be found satisfactory. This finding denotes the failure of the respondents in being attuned to one's own emotional intelligence and thereby not capable of reading and understanding the feelings of others. However, this verity cautions the Psychologists and academicians to find out suitable strategy and formulate certain delivery mechanism to enhance the EI of adolescents.

2. Thinking styles of the selected respondents

The current study explored 13 thinking styles that fall along five dimensions namely functions, forms, levels, scopes and leanings .Table II depicts the thinking styles of the selected respondents.

Table II
Thinking style of the selected respondents

Thinking Styles	Total (120)	
	No	%
FUNCTIONS		
Legislative	41	34.2
Executive	52	43.3
Judicial	53	44.2
Hierarchic	47	39.2
FORMS		
Monarchic	55	45.8
Oligarchic	46	38.3
Anarchic	36	30.0
LEVELS		
Global	25	20.8
Local	33	27.5
SCOPE		
Internal	51	42.5
External	59	49.2
LEANINGS		
Progressive	46	38.8
Conservative	44	36.7

From the functions it could be seen that the highest percentage of 44 percent of the respondents were judicial thinkers. Judicial people prefer problems in which they can analyse and evaluate existing rules, ways and ideas. Executive people are implementers they like to enforce rules and laws and rely on existing methods to complete tasks or master a situation. Hierarchics are systematic, priority setters who allocate resources carefully in their solutions to problems and in their decision making. The least was the legislative thinking styles with 34 percent who like to do things their own way creating and formulating new ideas and make their own rules.

Among the forms of thinking styles most of the respondents were found to possess the monarchic style with (46%).In other words the monarchic person focus single-mindedly on one task or aspect of a task until it is completed. In the oligarchic style there were 38 percent

respondents and the least was 30 percent with anarchic thinking style who have a potential for creativity that is rare in others as they are not constrained by boundaries of thought and action.

The level of thinking styles was either global or local, wherein it was observed that the respondents had a preponderance towards the local thinking styles with 28 percent who prefers to deal with specific, concrete details that often require precision to complete.

From the scope of thinking style it was seen that there were many external thinkers with 49 percent against internal thinkers (42%). Externalists prefer tasks that allow them to work with people through interaction they tend to be more extroverted, people-oriented, outgoing, socially more sensitive and interpersonally more aware whereas internal thinkers tend to be introverted, task-oriented, sometimes aloof and socially less sensitive than other people.

The last dimension was the leanings - progressive and conservative style. The table reveals that the number of progressive thinkers took an upper hand than the conservative thinkers. Progressive thinkers tend to be receptive to new ways of thinking and go beyond existing rules and procedures and seek to maximize change, whereas conservative thinkers prefer to adhere to existing rules and procedures, avoid ambiguous situations and prefer familiarity in life and work.

3. Relationship between the thinking style and Emotional Intelligence of the respondents

The Table III depicts the correlation of the different type of thinking styles with the domains of emotional intelligence (separately and as total EI).

Table III
Relationship between thinking styles and EI

Style of Thinking	Domain of Emotional Intelligence				Total EI
	Intrapersonal Awareness	Interpersonal Awareness	Intrapersonal Management	Interpersonal Management	
Legislative	0.303**	-0.01 ^{Ns}	0.031 ^{Ns}	-0.015 ^{Ns}	0.052 ^{Ns}
Executive	0.182*	-0.013*	-0.111 ^{Ns}	-0.111 ^{Ns}	-0.0444 ^{Ns}
Judicial	0.127 ^{Ns}	-0.039 ^{Ns}	0.107 ^{Ns}	-0.02 ^{Ns}	0.076 ^{Ns}
Hierarchic	0.172 ^{Ns}	-0.01 ^{Ns}	0.043 ^{Ns}	-0.006 ^{Ns}	0.074 ^{Ns}
Monarchic	0.296**	0.038 ^{Ns}	-0.1 ^{Ns}	0.07 ^{Ns}	0.032 ^{Ns}
Oligarchic	-0.025 ^{Ns}	-0.01 ^{Ns}	0.067 ^{Ns}	0.234*	0.12 ^{Ns}
Anarchic	0.175 ^{Ns}	-0.061 ^{Ns}	0.196*	0.135 ^{Ns}	0.195*
Global	0.046 ^{Ns}	0.069 ^{Ns}	0.156 ^{Ns}	0.047 ^{Ns}	0.133 ^{Ns}
Local	0.051 ^{Ns}	-0.031 ^{Ns}	-0.124 ^{Ns}	0.153 ^{Ns}	0.01 ^{Ns}
Internal	0.118 ^{Ns}	-0.028 ^{Ns}	-0.075 ^{Ns}	0.129 ^{Ns}	0.048 ^{Ns}
External	0.233*	0.033 ^{Ns}	0.082 ^{Ns}	0.063 ^{Ns}	0.156 ^{Ns}
Progressive	0.128 ^{Ns}	0.033 ^{Ns}	0.089 ^{Ns}	0.178 ^{Ns}	0.172 ^{Ns}
Conservative	0.135*	0.063 ^{Ns}	0.106 ^{Ns}	0.071 ^{Ns}	0.147 ^{Ns}

The table denotes that the legislative thinking style was positively correlated only with the intrapersonal awareness of the sample with correlation value of 0.303, df -1, p<.01. For an individual to be aware of himself/herself, creativity / innovation was always found to be an enhancer. In this line, Kaufman (2002)[6] had also observed that creative thinkers had a significantly higher score on legislative style thinking, which supports construct validity as the legislative style characterizes people who enjoy creating and formulating new ideas to be aware of themselves.

Among the executive thinkers it was found that there is a correlation with the two domains of intrapersonal and interpersonal awareness at 0.182 and -0.013, df-5, p<.05 but at a positive and negative way respectively. In other words, by being aware of their own emotions the individual prefer to follow rules, given guidance and structure. However executive thinkers find problems in enforcing rules and laws as it involve people around them and hence were forced to rely on existing methods to complete tasks or master a situation.

The monarchic style characterizes people who tend to be motivated by a single goal or need at a time and the table signifies that this type of thinking style is positively correlated with the intrapersonal awareness at 0.296 df-1, $p < .01$. In other words by being aware of themselves they could focus single-mindedly on one task or aspect of a task until it is completed and perform better in areas that match their interests.

Oligarchic people are often flexible and can adapt quickly to circumstances and we can see that this type was positively correlated with interpersonal management at 0.234 df-5, $p < .05$. The ability of these type of people to manage others emotion make them prefer to work in toward multiple objectives during same period of time. In consistent with this finding, Hess and Bacigalupo, (2011)[7] had hinted that with the ability to adapt quickly to situations enhances their capability of understanding and managing others emotions.

On the other hand, anarchic thinking style was found to be positively correlated with the intrapersonal management at 0.196 df-5, $p < .05$. The anarchic style characterizes people who tend to be motivated by a wide assortment of needs and goals and do not like to be tied down to systems, rules, or particular approaches to problems. This uniqueness increases their capacity of managing their own emotion effectively.

Moreover, the external and conservative style of thinking procured positive correlation (0.233 df-5, $p < .05$ and 0.135 df-5, $p < .05$ respectively) with interpersonal awareness score. To simplify, the external thinkers' unique feature of working with people through interaction and the conservative thinkers' feature of avoiding ambiguous situation facilitates them to be aware of themselves.

Furthermore, considering the correlation of total EI with the styles of thinking only anarchic thinker were found to have positive correlation with the overall EI at 0.195 df-5, $p < .05$. This in other words indicates, that an anarchic individual who have had a motivation towards a wide assortment of needs and goals have better EI.

Hence, the hypothesis – was rejected as the EI and thinking styles of the selected sample had a meaningful relationship, though not at a highly significant level.

Taking this finding into consideration, policy makers, educationists and psychologists should realize the importance of thinking styles in enhancing EI among adolescents and facilitate multiple thinking skills among them, so that all their four areas of emotional intelligence could be made better.

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