

Emotional Intelligence Is Synergy in Intelligence*

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Abstract

Three emotional intelligence models are widely discussed in the literature: the ability model, trait model, and mixed model. This study introduces a model for understanding emotional intelligence: the synergy model. The emotional intelligence model presented in this study is simple and easy to understand. This study suggests that emotional intelligence is the synergy present in intelligence, where total intelligence is the sum of the intelligence quotient, emotional quotient, and unexplained quotient. The model shows three possible outcomes of emotional intelligence. It also suggests that the best way to understand and measure the impact of emotional intelligence is to listen, observe, and feel (LOF) it.

Keywords

Emotional Intelligence, Synergy, Triggering Event, Emotional Intensity, Emotional Energy

1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence refers to a set of abilities and capabilities that individuals possess in order to feel, control, and manage their emotions. “Emotional intelligence is not a new discovery” (Ahmed, 2010a: p. 34). The concern over managing emotions and the desire for intelligence has been part of our society for centuries. Parents teach their children how to manage emotions. In turn, these children grow up and teach their own children how to manage emotions. In addition to learning from our parents, we learn how to manage emotions from our interactions with our family, friends, teachers, coworkers, and managers at work. Emotional intelligence concerns the emotions, abilities, and capabilities of human beings. It is best understood by analyzing personal experiences. Ahmed (2014a) shared his personal experiences, stating “For example, when I was a little boy, I pinched my

*This paper offers a revision of the model published in 2010; an integration of short articles from 2013 and 2014.

cousin because she was not sharing her toys with me... She started crying when I pinched her. My uncle was *observing* us and asked me to go and sit with him. After I sat down and started complaining about my cousin, he softly pinched me. I *felt* the pinch and told him that it hurt. He said, ‘Yes, pinching hurts people. That’s why you should not pinch your cousin’. Afterward, he instructed me to politely (feel and manage emotions) ask my cousin to share the toys with me. He also asked my cousin to *listen* to my request that she share the toys. She agreed to my polite request, and it was a good lesson on managing emotions”. The analysis of the childhood experience shows that the boy was just interested in playing with the toys. He did not manage his emotions and got angry with his cousin. He did not empathize with her emotions before pinching her. This analysis also reinforces the researcher’s belief that listening, observing, and feeling (LOF) are essential for understanding emotional intelligence and using emotional intelligence to achieve a desired outcome. Based on individuals’ experiences, it is reasonable to state that emotional intelligence is not a new discovery. Everyone learns how to manage emotions and use emotional intelligence from an early age to achieve a desired outcome. Parents may have witnessed the emotional intelligence of their child while he or she was growing up. They may have used some other label or word to explain the child’s emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence probably existed from the time human life started on earth (Ahmed, 2010a).

In the 1980s, globalization and growth in the size and structure of businesses forced businesses to look for new tools to improve performance, using both behavioral and non-behavioral tools. This led researchers to focus on ways to improve business performance using behavioral and non-behavioral tools and techniques. The publication of Goleman’s book *Emotional Intelligence* (Goleman, 1995) increased awareness about the value of emotional intelligence in the business world (Ahmed, 2010a). Large businesses with monetary resources realized the potential benefits of using emotional intelligence when training managers and employees—it caused them to perform better in the workplace. Small and medium-sized businesses around the world remained unaware of the benefits of emotional intelligence because of a lack of intellectual and monetary resources. Management researchers suggest that large corporations have successfully used emotional intelligence in employee recruitment, training, and promotions. The researchers also suggest that the use of emotional intelligence in selected management areas may positively impact the performance of a firm. The problem is that it is difficult to identify or measure the level of change in performance as a result of using emotional intelligence. This is because 1) emotional intelligence is a human process for achieving the desired performance outcomes and therefore differs from person to person, and 2) corporate performance is the result of teamwork, and it is difficult to empirically show that individuals’ emotional intelligence has translated into improved group performance (Ahmed, 2010b, 2014a). The goal of the paper is twofold: first, to introduce an emotional intelligence model that is simple for the average individual to understand and use for improving business performance in small or large businesses, and second, to provide a simple way to understand or measure the impact of emotional intelligence on business performance.

2. Emotional Intelligence Models

Three emotional intelligence models are widely discussed in emotional intelligence literature: the ability model, the trait model, and the mixed model. The ability model focuses on the individual’s ability to perceive emotions, use emotions, understand emotions, and manage emotions to promote thinking and cognitive activity. The trait model focuses on a personality framework and includes measures of non-cognitive abilities. The trait model suggests that individuals have a number of emotional self-perceptions and emotional traits that form their personality. The ability and trait model differ in terms of theoretical explanations and measurements. The mixed model focuses on self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. The mixed model suggests that the abilities and capabilities to manage emotions can be learned and improved with training and development (Ahmed, 2010a). The topic of emotional intelligence is important for individuals, businesses, and research communities because of its potential impact on the performance of organizations. According to Bar-On (1997, 2000), Goleman (1998a, 1998b), and Stein and Book (2003), emotional intelligence is an important part of an individual’s ability to influence the performance of an organization. Emotional intelligence has been a topic of discussion in research for several decades.

In the research community today models by Bar-On (1997); Dulewicz and Higgs (1999, 2000); and Goleman (1995, 1998) are widely discussed, as is the four-dimensional ability model by Mayer and Salovey (1990, 1997). They offer theoretical explanations of emotional intelligence and associated measures. The three emotional intelligence models widely being discussed in the emotional intelligence literature are: the ability model, the trait

model, and the mixed model. In addition to being widely discussed and including measurements for emotional intelligence, they are unfortunately complex and time consuming. This paper presents a simple and practical model for understanding emotional intelligence. The model suggests that emotional intelligence is a synergy generated by an individual’s ability and capability; it is used by individuals to achieve desired outcomes.

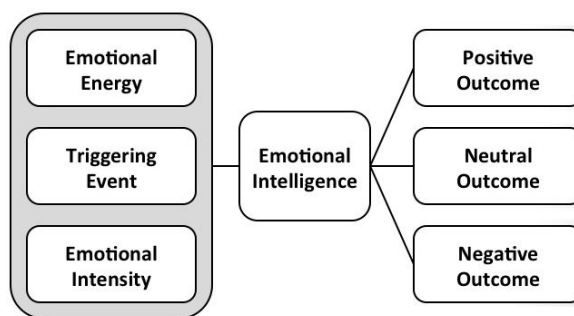
3. The Emotional Intelligence (Synergy) Model

The synergy model (Figure 1) presented in this paper is based on the assumptions that every individual possesses energy; levels of emotional energy naturally differ from individual to individual; and emotional intensity can be managed through training and therapy. The emotional intelligence process starts with a triggering event. Based on the understanding or misunderstanding of the trigger, individuals feel and manage their emotions to generate synergy in intelligence. Feeling and managing emotions is a process that includes abilities and capabilities, and the amount and intensity of energy to generate synergy. The synergy in intelligence is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence (synergy) is used to achieve a desired outcome. There are three possible desired outcomes from using emotional intelligence: positive, neutral, or negative (Ahmed, 2010a).

How an individual chooses to use emotional intelligence, consciously or unconsciously, depends on the individual’s abilities and capabilities. The synergy generation process (Figure 2) illustrates how abilities and capabilities are required for feeling and managing emotions as well as for generating synergy (Ahmed, 2014a).

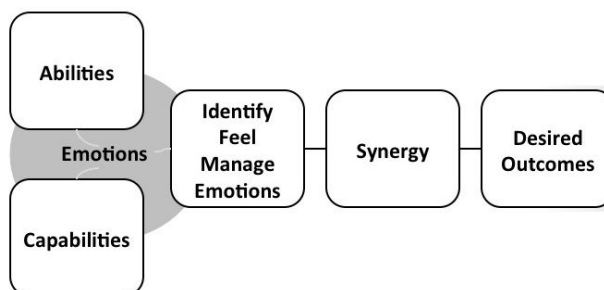
A triggering event initiates the synergy (emotional intelligence) generation process. Individuals choose the amount of energy and intensity to generate synergy (emotional intelligence) based on their understanding or misunderstanding of the trigger and their ability and capability to feel and manage the emotions. The outcome is the result of using emotional intelligence and may be positive, neutral, or negative (Ahmed, 2010a).

Emotional intelligence is the synergy in intelligence. It occurs by understanding the emotions of others and managing your own emotions. Synergy is the increase in capacity that results from feeling and managing emotions. The total intelligence of an individual has several components. The total intelligence quotient (TIQ) is a function of the intelligence quotient (IQ), emotional quotient (EQ), and unknown quotient (UQ). Figure 3 shows the total intelligence quotient over a period of time and the three variables of intelligence (Ahmed, 2014b).



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Figure 1. Emotional intelligence model.



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Figure 2. Synergy generation process.

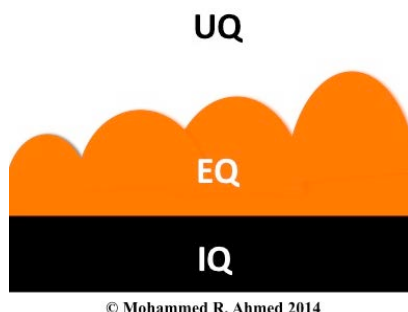


Figure 3. Total intelligence quotient based on triggering events.

People around the world understand the measurement of IQ. In my opinion, EQ is still at the developmental stage, though several researchers claim that they can accurately measure EQ. In my opinion, EQ is the synergy generated by feeling and managing emotions. It is a human process for achieving desired performance outcomes and differs from person to person. That is why it may be difficult to measure without including three variables: listening, observing, and feeling in the instrument of measurement. Lastly, there are several unknown quotients that make up the total intelligence quotient (Ahmed, 2014b).

4. Practicality of the Model

A qualitative research process is appropriate for showing the practicality of the model. It will demonstrate that: 1) the synergy generation process starts with a triggering event; 2) emotional intelligence (synergy) is the result of abilities and capabilities; and 3) there are three possible outcomes from using emotional intelligence.

This paper presents a conceptual framework for understanding how the emotional intelligence process works and determining the impact of intelligence on performance. Miles and Huberman (1994) define a conceptual framework as a written or visual product explained through a graphical or narrative form; it also includes all the factors, concepts, or variable needed to understand the model. This paper presents the model in a graphical and narrative form as well as identifies the variables that are needed to understand the presumed relationship among them.

To understand the relationship among the variables presented in the model, a “conceptual framing process” is used to test the model. In this paper, the conceptual framing involves a process where the researcher develops a scenario based on personal experiences or observations that frame the developed model. The conceptual framing of the model is like creating a picture or composing a film of the model in the minds of readers. The researcher can use pictures, audio links, video links, or other technological tools to effectively illustrate the model in the minds of readers. In the past, these types of qualitative techniques were not acceptable because of a lack of resources and unfamiliarity with the technology. A qualitative research design is appropriate in this research because it focuses on getting information from the participants or the potential users of the model. It also aids in understanding individual or group experiences, behaviors, and outcomes. Qualitative research involves observation as a data collection process. It allows researcher to record behavior to better understand the emotional intelligence process. Observing behavior is a useful method for gathering information, which can then be used to analyze the emotional intelligence process. This information is difficult to obtain using other methods. In this paper both conceptual framing and observation methods will be used to establish the practicality of the model.

5. Conceptual Framing of the Model

Conceptual framing is an appropriate approach to understanding the emotional intelligence process because human beings are capable of framing a human process in their minds by reading a scenario, listening to a story, looking at pictures, or watching a video. Ahmed (2010a) suggested that the emotional intelligence process starts as soon as a child is born, and the best way to understand it is by observing children. In the following conceptual framing of the synergy model, Ahmed’s (2010a) three triplets scenario was used to showcase the emotional intelligence process.

Three triplets are sleeping in separate cribs in a children’s room. Their mother is resting in another room (Figure 4).

One of the triplets wakes up and starts crying. The second triplet wakes up and joins him in crying. Finally, the third triplet wakes up and starts crying (**Figure 5**). The mother walks into the room to calm them down. She then leaves to prepare bottles of milk (**Figure 6**). The first triplet starts crying again, the second follows the first and starts whining (crying on and off), and the third triplet just watches the other two brothers crying. This time, the triplets do not get immediate attention from the mother because she is preparing bottles of milk for them (**Figure 7**). The first triplet starts crying louder and becomes emotional because he does not get immediate attention from his mother. In an effort to find her, he climbs the crib (which he has never done before) and falls onto the cushioned floor. The second triplet stands up in the crib and watches his brother on the floor. The third triplet watches the brother on the floor while lying on his back (**Figure 8**). In a few minutes the mother walks into the room and is surprised to find the first triplet on the floor (**Figure 9**). The mother immediately picks up the child to verify that he is not hurt. Fortunately, he is fine. She asks him with a firm voice “How did you get out of the crib, son?” (**Figure 10**)



Figure 4. Three triplets sleeping.



Figure 5. Hungry (trigger) triplets crying.

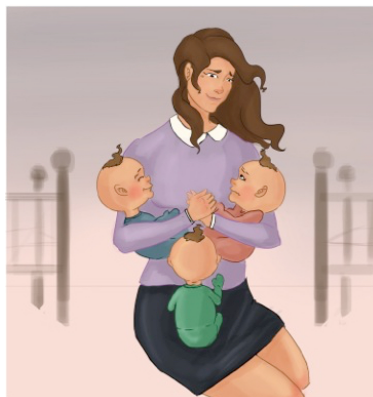


Figure 6. Mother comforting the triplets.



Figure 7. Mother preparing milk.

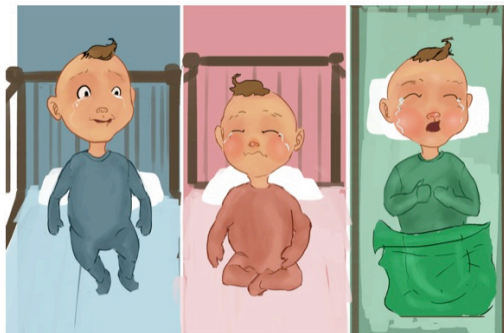


Figure 8. Triplets managing their emotions for a desired outcome.



Figure 9. Mother is surprised to see the child on the floor.



Figure 10. Mother is asking the child “How did you get out of the crib, son?”

The child watches the mother with his twinkling eyes. If he could speak, he would have said “Mother, I used my emotional intelligence”. This is an example of how a child learns to feel and manage emotions in an effort to achieve a desired outcome.

The three triplets were in good health, had the same energy levels, and were all hungry. When the triplets were hungry and started crying again they expected their mother to respond to their call—the hunger triggered their emotions again. This time, they did not receive an immediate response from their mother. The hunger triggered their emotional intelligence process. The triplets used their emotional energy and intensity to achieve the desired outcome based on their individual understandings of the trigger event, their abilities, and their capabilities. The first triplet used high energy and intensity to achieve the desired outcome of finding his mother: he climbed out of the crib to find her. The second appeared to have used moderate emotional intensity: he stood up in the crib, crying. The third triplet seemed to have used low emotional intensity: he was lying in the crib and crying for his mother. This conceptual framing of the three triplets shows that the emotional intelligence (synergy) process started with the triggering event of hunger. Based on their abilities and capabilities, the triplets used their emotional energy and emotional intensity to achieve their desired outcome.

6. Evaluation of the Model

An observational approach is a good opportunity to observe emotional intelligence at work in group meetings, sporting events, social gatherings, or while watching sports broadcasts in public or private places. These observations include football games and soccer games, including the Super Bowl (football) and the World Cup (soccer), that are broadcast in public and private places. While observing in a public place, there were multiple television sets and multiple games being shown at the same time. In the private group, there was one television and the group watched set and one game. The observations of individuals watching sports, both in private and public places, indicated that people could be divided into three groups according to their level of emotional intensity. The first group was involved in giving each other powerful high fives, handshakes, and shouting at the television as if they were controlling the game. The second group was jumping off of their chairs and participating in a victory dance or a ritual every time the team advanced near the goal or made a goal. The third group was sitting on the right side and enjoying the excitement of the game as a family or with a group of friends. In a small and private group, although the focus is on one team, the three different levels of emotional energy were still present. The observation of these groups supported the model’s assumptions that all individual have emotional energy, that the level of emotional intensity differs from individual to individual, and that emotional energy is triggered by an event. The first group was using a high level of emotional intensity; the second was using a moderate level of emotional intensity; and third was using a low level of emotional intensity. The three identified groups exhibited different levels of emotional intensity, and they used emotional intelligence in an attempt to achieve their desired outcomes. The three groups were watching sports and had different desired outcomes. The first group tried to control the outcome of the game by shouting at the television; the second group was interested in enjoying the game; and the third group was interested in enjoying a nice meal with a sports-loving crowd. These observations of groups watching sports align with the framework of the emotional intelligence (synergy) model.

The question is whether some other group event would support the framework of the model. A luau gathering was selected because it presents a good opportunity to observe diverse groups of people having fun by eating, listening to Hawaiian music, and watching hula dancers. The observations from the luau indicated that individuals could be divided into groups based on their emotional intensity. The first group was wearing Hawaiian shirts and dresses, powerfully hi-fiving each other, and interacting with the dancers as if they were controlling the show. The second group was getting up from their chairs and joining in a hula dance whenever the dancers moved in their direction or pointed towards them. The third group was enjoying the excitement of the dance and show with their children. The observations at the luau proved again that every individual has emotional energy and that the intensity differs from individual to individual. Emotional intelligence is the synergy generated by managing emotions. It is an individual human process for achieving desired performance outcomes and, therefore, differs from person to person. The three groups at the luau exhibited different levels of emotional intensity and synergy in order to achieve their desired performance outcomes. The synergy of emotional intelligence helps individuals to achieve those outcomes. The three groups at the luau had three different desired outcomes. The group near the bar was using high intensity energy; the group on the left side of the stage was using moderate intensity energy; and the group on the right was using low intensity energy. To understand how one chooses

to use emotional intelligence, consciously or unconsciously, depends on the level of emotional intensity and the triggering events.

7. Measuring Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the synergy present in intelligence. Synergy is the result of individuals' abilities and capabilities. Emotional intelligence is a human process for achieving desired performance outcomes. Therefore, it differs from time to time based on individual understandings of the triggers, the amount of energy produced, and the intensity of the energy used to generate synergy. Emotional intelligence is sometimes difficult to quantify and measure because the individual human process is not a single universal process. According to Ahmed (2010a, 2013, 2014a), the simplest and best way to measure the level of emotional intelligence in an individual or group in the workplace is as follows: "during the socialization, **listen** to what the person is saying, **observe** the behavior, and **feel** the emotion (LOF). A questionnaire with 100 to 200 questions is not an effective way to quantify emotional intelligence because participants understand the purpose of the questionnaires and may respond to questions using emotional intelligence to achieve their desired outcome". As the process of synergy generation is studied, the emotional intelligence model is fully operationalized. An instrument based on the three variables of measurement—feel, observe, and listen—will be used to measure emotional intelligence. This will allow small and large organizations all around the world to measure changes in organizational performance. Additionally, the organizations will be able to focus on the application of emotional intelligence at all levels of the organization to improve performance.

8. Summary and Conclusion

Managing emotions has been recognized for centuries as promoting healthy relationships between individuals, groups, and organization. The value of managing emotions for improving individual and organizational performance was introduced in management literature in the 1980s. The emotional intelligence process is a human process. It is always beneficial to use personal experiences and examples to understand emotional intelligence processes. That is why the triplet scenario was used to conceptually frame the model and why the football and luau observations were used to understand the synergy generation process. According to Ahmed (2010a), one important lesson that managers may learn from the study of emotional intelligence is that "emotional intelligence exists in all ages, genders, and races... how and when it will be used depends on the individuals" (p. 35). This study shows that emotional intelligence is the synergy in intelligence. Also, the synergy generation process starts with a triggering event. In the case of the three triplets, the triggering event was hunger. Based on their individual understanding of the trigger, they managed their emotions to achieve the desired outcome. The desired outcome was probably to get the mother's attention to satisfy their hunger. Although the three children (triplets) had the same desired outcome, the first triplet used low emotional intensity, lay down in the crib, and started crying. The second triplet used a moderate emotional intensity, stood up in the crib, and started crying. The first triplet used high emotional intensity, climbed over the crib, and landed on the floor. The conceptual framing of the triplets shows that the use of emotional intelligence may result in three possible types of outcomes: positive, neutral, or negative. All the triplets have the same desired outcome of satisfying their hunger. The first triplet uses high emotional intensity: he landed on the floor and could have gotten hurt, which would have resulted in a negative outcome. The model shows that there are three possible outcomes, and one may or may not be able to achieve the desired outcome. The successes of achieving the desired outcome will depend, as Ahmed (2010b) suggests that managing emotions involves analysis and controlling/processing of the emotional trigger, regulation of the intensity of the emotions that are the result of the trigger, and amount of emotional energy to be used. Every individual has these abilities, and they go through this emotional management process both on a conscious and an unconscious level.

Organizations may experience benefits when managers and employees are introduced to processes of generating synergy in intelligence (emotional intelligence) and processes of how to feel and manage emotions. Once the organizations learn how to measure individual and group emotional intelligence in a simple way and match it with various job descriptions, they will be able to improve their overall organizational performance (Ahmed, 2010a).

The researcher has observed sporting events, social events, and group meetings from the last five years. The conceptual framing and observations present in this study confirm the researcher's belief that the emotional in-

telligence process starts with a triggering event. Based on the understanding of the trigger and individuals' abilities and capabilities, the synergy in intelligence may result in three possible outcomes: positive, neutral, or negative. Lastly, the best way to measure the levels of emotional intelligence is to socialize with individuals or groups. During this process, **listen** to what they have to say, **observe** their behaviors, and **feel** others' emotions (LOF).

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