

Valorisation of Managerial and Entrepreneurial Qualities Through the Development of Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

This paper aims to approach the valorisation of the components of emotional intelligence, regarded as important abilities developed and used by managers and entrepreneurs in the configuration of the work strategies necessary for their activity. These qualities favour an efficient communication and provide an optimal work environment.

Along with the responsibilities deriving from the managing position, leading an organization also supposes the development of the necessary skills and abilities. The position of managers or entrepreneurs relies on certain skills that favour intercommunication and interaction, necessary for motivating the employees to achieve their goals.

The professional skills of successful managers and entrepreneurs include many common features, such as: self-awareness, a good perception of reality, management of personal emotions, motivation, perseverance, determination in pursuing a certain activity, empathy, efficient valorisation of social and affective relationships, team building, spirit of solidarity, a positive influence on the employees, the ability of engaging people, social interaction skills etc. The development of these abilities is favoured by the emotional intelligence, essential for the position of manager or entrepreneur within any organization.

Key words: emotional intelligence, emotional skills, managerial and entrepreneurial qualities

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1. Introduction

Emotions are an essential part of all human activities and have often been regarded as a counterpart to the idea of reason. For a long time, the qualities of the spirit (or reason) have been privileged over the emotions, regarded as negative. Generally speaking, intelligence is regarded as the ability to easily understand something, to detect what is essential, to easily find solutions to troubling situations on the basis of previous experience.

Nowadays, many studies have been conducted in order to determine the role of emotions in the individuals' private or social life. Social and human sciences have been showing new interest towards the impact of emotions in different areas. Neurosciences and functional imaging techniques have been making great steps ahead, and now they are able to offer new insights regarding the neural bases of emotions and brain functions, thus providing an indispensable foundation in order to explore the complex character of the affective phenomena. Many contemporary scientists gave new credit to the old idea of the adaptative role of emotions. According to them, emotions are necessary for the proper functioning of our faculties, such as memory, reason, decision making or social adaptation (Bobot, 2010, p. 408).

Recent evolution of management practices have outlined the role of emotions at the workplace: first of all, they act as regulators of human activity and of the people's involvement therein, and secondly, they are indispensable elements of the professional skills in all the activities of an organization. Emotions are an integral part of the professional life, but overchallenging them is rather dangerous both for the organization and for the employees..

There is a wide variety of definitions of the emotions. Kleinginna (1981) had listed 92 definitions which were present in the specialist literature on this subject. It is worth to mention Scherer's definition (2001), as it proves relevant for the topic in discussion: *an emotion is an episode of interrelated, synchronized changes in the states of the five organismic systems (cognitive system, psycho-physiological system, motivational system, motor system and monitor system), in an independent and synchronized manner, in response to the evaluation of an external or internal stimulus, as relevant to the major concerns of the organism.*

Emotions are thus psychological and physical reactions to an internal or external event. They determine moral judgments of the individuals and play a part in the decision-making process. They can be categorized as primary or secondary emotions, social emotions, pleasant or unpleasant emotions and so on. Facial expressions allowed for the identification of six universal emotions. Dr. Ekman, Professor of Psychology, is one of the first scientists to have identified six basic emotions (fear, anger, sadness, surprise, disgust and happiness). He also proved that facial behavior is universal, which means that these essential emotions can be found in all cultures, regardless of race, religion or language (Mernica, 2010, p. 15).

2. Literature review

The notion of emotional intelligence (EI) dates back to the early '90s, with Salovey and Mayer's studies (1990). Before that point, scientists like Gardner, Thuston, Wayne Leon Payne (Mernica, 2010) had also discussed certain aspects regarding EI, focusing on the personal and social features of intelligence (interpersonal and intrapersonal).

In the strict sense, EI refers to the degree of emotional maturity of the individuals, their ability of being at peace with themselves, of staying emotionally balanced and being aware of their potential emotions but not letting themselves overwhelmed by them. In a broader sense, EI also includes the abilities which allow the individuals to create harmonic, creative, assertive and respectful relationships with the surrounding world.

Goleman (1997, p. 52), one of the pioneers of this theory, defines EI as empathy, the ability of self-motivation or perseverance through adversity, self-regulation of one's own impulses and the ability of waiting quietly for the accomplishment of one's wishes, maintaining constant humour, not letting oneself be dominated by grief to the point of being unable to think or hope.

Specialist literature uses three theoretical models, whose pragmatical value is validated by several practical applications, aiming to assess and evaluate EI (Table 1).

Table no. 1: Main models of the assessment of EI

| EI models | Description |
|------------------------------|---|
| BAR-ON Model (1997) | EI is presented as a mixed type of intelligence, consisting of an ability and personality traits. This models outlines the EI influence on welfare in general. |
| GOLEMAN Model (1999) | EI is also presented as a mixed type of intelligence, consisting of the cognitive ability and personality traits. This model is centered on the EI influence on success at the workplace. |
| SALOVEY & MAYER Model (1997) | EI is considered a pure form of intelligence, which means EI is itself understood as a cognitive ability. |

Source: (Bobot, L., 2010, p. 410)

The BAR-ON Model is one of the first assessments of EI, on the basis of several emotional and social skills, founded on five areas:

- Intrapersonal: being aware of one's own emotions; personal accomplishment
- Interpersonal: being aware of the others, understanding and maintaining relationships with them, which proves one's empathic skills

- Adaptation: being able to adapt to changes, to assess solutions, to fix social or personal problems
- Stress management: dealing with pressure, maintaining self-control;
- General humour: being able to remain optimistic, to exploit present in one's own advantage and to create a positive environment.

The BAR-ON Model allows for a localisation of underdeveloped areas, in order to improve them. This model defines EI as a complex of interconnected social and emotional skills, abilities and facilitators (all the measures adopted by the organization), which determine how efficiently one can identify and express himself, understands the others, works with them and copes with daily requirements. This components of emotional functioning allow the individuals to experience and express positive emotions and stay optimistic.

GOLEMAN's last model (2018), a revised version of his previous models, maintains four dimensions of EI: self-awareness, self-regulation, social conscience or empathy and social skills or human relationships management. These four dimensions of the EI comprise 20 emotional components, as follows:

1. SELF-AWARENESS

- Being aware of one's own emotions
- Trying to assess oneself
- Belief in one's own potential

2. SELF-REGULATION

- Maintaining self-control
- Proving integrity
- Professional conscience
- Openness to changes
- Pursuing excellence
- Taking initiatives
- A positive spirit

3. SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

- Listening and being open to the others.
- Decoding the balance of powers and influences
- Understanding the meaning of the services performed

4. SOCIAL SKILLS (HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS MANAGEMENT)

- Inspiring the others
- Persuasive communication
- Promoting the development of the others
- Initiating change
- Conflict anticipation and management
- Bonding
- Efficient collaboration

Goleman's model is focused on EI in the context of the workplace. In our present society, emotional skills are necessary for the creation of conditions which allow sharing of knowledge and building trust, which are essential steps in order to obtain functional teams. It is worth mentioning that a manager's success is strongly connected to their cognitive emotional skills. The manager's EI determines the performance of the entire organization, because it is an essential ingredient of their transformational leadership. A good leader has to allow the maximization of the EI, thus developing the team's self-awareness, its self-regulation and empathy.

Salovey and Mayer's model starts from a revised version of their definition of the EI from 1990. The revised definition refers to a characterization of the EI which now enjoys broader agreement. EI is thus the ability of an individual to perceive emotions, to integrate them in order to facilitate thought, to understand their own emotions and to regulate them in order to promote personal growth. The two scientists divide EI in four categories of skills:

- Perception, assessment and expression of emotions;
- Use of emotions in order to facilitate thinking;
- Understanding emotions

- Management of emotions in order to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

2. Research methodology

The present paper is a preliminary step for a more complex research that we are conducting in the field of management and education. It is a bibliographical synthesis of the main scientific perspectives on emotional intelligence, starting from the early '90s, with Salovey and Mayer's studies, continuing with Goleman's approach and its revised versions to our days, without neglecting names like Bar-On or Abric and their main standpoints.

The paper also discusses the framework promoted by the European Union in documents regarding management and entrepreneurship. This study is, therefore, to be continued by an on-the-field analysis regarding welfare and wellbeing in the workplace as a result of successful, empathetic, management.

4. EI in entrepreneurship

Synthetically, entrepreneurship is the action of creating an organization, after a process wherein innovation plays an essential part. The European Commission (2003, p.6) defines entrepreneurship as a state of mind and the process of creation and development of the economic activity, combining risk acceptance, creativity and/or innovation and a good management, within a new or already existent organization.

A real economic revolution of developed countries, also experienced by Central and East European countries (the ex-Communist countries), which began during the last decade of the 20th century, determined the transition from a managerial economy to an entrepreneurial one. A complex of interrelated factors (Marchesnay, 2008) brought this change to happen:

- Hyper-segmentation of the markets of large organizations, after reaching demand saturation through a huge quantity of consumer goods. Organizations are thus compelled to adopt segmentation strategies, in order to reach every segment of consumers.
- Under this double pressure, from clients and adversaries, the organization has to increase its reactivity, which in turn leads to several reconfigurations of the organizational structures and to a boom of small businesses.
- Externalization and specialization offer new alternatives and also lead to a reconfiguration of the enterprises.

In this new context of changes in the configuration of the markets, bureaucratic managerial organizations promote the entrepreneurial spirit once again. Small and medium enterprises have to deal with the risks concerning the invested capital, but are attracted and motivated by the idea of independence and by the possibility of achieving their own goals, according to their sets of values.

The scientometric analysis of the studies regarding the impact of the EI on managers and employees within certain organizations outlines the fact that many studies deal with the effects of the EI on managers, but very few studies regard the same effects on entrepreneurs. An entrepreneur has to meet some requirements which have a direct impact on the emotional skills which should be prioritized: the complementarity of the team members (as communication and collaboration are essential in order to achieve perfection), the importance of group cohesion and team spirit, the technical skills of the staff (qualified coworkers) and the family sphere—all play an essential part.

5. Specific qualities of successful managers and entrepreneurs

A first category of managerial and entrepreneurial skills, related to emotional intelligence, refers to *self-awareness*, as a balanced attitude of character, which means that the subject makes a fair and correct assessment of their own personality. This level implies several managerial elements, which are actually the synthesis of theoretical knowledge (concepts, principles, formulas, essential data) and practical skills (abilities and habits), supported by certain attitudes (from a motivational, affective, volitive and character perspective):

a) Achieving a realistic self-image: this skill refers to the self-definition of the managerial status, to the skills and abilities which are necessary in order to solve the managerial problems which are inherent to any organization, as well as certain attitudes and values which condition the efficiency of the managerial act. The position of manager or entrepreneur implies interaction and communication with the others. This is why managers are expected to be aware of the reason for which they have accepted this position, of what motivates them to pursue this job (the need for control, the wish to guide the others or to be regarded as an expert etc.). Managers with a high degree of self-awareness are able to monitor both their own language particularities and those of the others, and, therefore, they manage to avoid certain verbal pathologies which could lead to misunderstandings, conflicts or psychological disorders.

b) Being aware of one's own emotions and of their impact on the others: this skill relies on knowledge of one's own affective structure, skills and habits of solving problems with social, affective, motivational and character impact, supported by positive attitudes (from an affective, motivational, volitive and character perspective). Those who own this quality do not act impulsively, as they know that this can lead to unproductive behaviours; they manage to stay positive and focused during difficult times or under pressure. Managers and entrepreneurs with a high degree of self-awareness are able to choose their own words with no difficulty and they easily adopt the most suitable discourse strategy.

c) Knowing one's strengths and limits: this skill relies on the principle of moral education, which identifies and emphasizes one's strengths in order to remove one's own negative traits; it also refers to habits and skills which allow people to solve certain problems that require managerial qualities, and to the removal of the negative aspects, upon becoming aware of them and critically examining them. People who develop this skill are aware of what they know well and which of their skills can help them to successfully complete the activity, as they are to be appreciated for the way they perform their job and for the way they act using their personal skills and knowledge.

d) Improving self-esteem: this skill combines the notion of self-esteem (which, according to the type of managerial leadership one performs, refers to systemic, optimal, strategic and innovative leadership) and the skills and habits of managerial leadership which confirm the self-esteem supported by one's attitude. People who achieve this quality are able to build trust, through consistency, fairness, honesty, ethics and perseverance in the pursuit of one's goals. They are always honest communicators, who do not threaten the autonomy of the listener through subconscious attacks.

e) A fair self-assessment of the managerial leadership in relation with the notion of managerial leadership (systemic, optimal, strategic and innovative leadership) and with the skills and habits of efficient leadership: this skill relies on the valorisation of the existent resources, supported by the manager's attitude. In assessment contexts, managers who develop this skill will be able to communicate the results of their activity in a clear and realistic way.

f) Self-reflection and self-analysis of the managerial leadership: this skill combines the concepts of change management and acceptance of ambiguity in an open context with the skills and habits which allow one to solve problems regarding the restructuring of the activity, supported by attitudes, from an affective, volitive, motivational and character perspective. Good managers are able to define specific, relevant and measurable, long-term and short-term goals, which provide a direction and help them to grow. They are also able to communicate these goals to the employees, in a clear way, using language as a strategic resource.

A second basic quality is the so-called **self-regulation**, that is the management of personal emotions. It involves the acquisition of the following skills:

a) Coping with critical situations, generated by stress and frustration: this skill includes the ability to adapt to problematic situations or the ability to solve them on the basis of suitable habits and principles, supported by adequate attitudes. Top managers and entrepreneurs are able to use strategies which allow them to control strong emotions and to manage daily stress effectively. This ability also refers to the skillful use of verbal and nonverbal language.

b) An adequate expression of one's emotions, in the context of self-control, when dealing with stress and impulsiveness; this skill combines the notion of expression and self-control of the emotions in the context of efficient self-assessment with skills and habits of management of the affective states, which are typical for the process of managerial communication, supported by

attitudes (from a motivational, affective, volitive and character point of view). Those who develop this skill are able to manage stress without losing control. They are also able to use suitable words in every context and to properly express their emotions in the communication with the others.

c) ***Flexibility, adaptability and receptiveness of the manager to change contexts***; this skills combines the idea of self-control of the affective states with the ability to valorise it in an open context. These qualities are supported and perfected by affective, volitive, motivational and character attitudes. Managers and entrepreneurs prove themselves to be flexible if they are open in the communication and if they can express complex ideas in a clear and simple way.

The third quality of managers and entrepreneurs, developed through the valorisation of emotional intelligence, is ***self-motivation***.

a) The notion of motivation refers, first of all, to the idea of ***intrinsic motivation*** of managers and entrepreneurs, who are able to combine theoretical knowledge of social internal motivation with the abilities (skills and habits) they have been using and testing in multiple situations in order to overcome themselves, supported by attitudes and with a constant orientation towards development. A successful manager will always set high standards, both for themselves and for the employees, thus inspiring them to avoid stagnation and seek change, improvement, update to everything that is new in their field. Successful managers are receptive to changes and new ideas and will influence the entire organization in this direction. They constantly show respect for the power of language in the communication with the employees, in order to send clear messages, be persuasive and determine the others to accept their points of view.

b) Motivation also refers to the ***manager's personal achievements and growth***, a skill that combines the conceptual dimension (of professional, managerial, pedagogical, sociological, cultural and economical development) with the abilities (skills and habits) which allow managers to solve problems by overcoming themselves and by displaying a permanent creative initiative, supported by certain attitudes which maintain a substantial and enduring managerial optimism.

The fourth quality of successful managers and entrepreneurs, enhanced through the development of emotional intelligence, is ***empathy***, which includes the following skills:

a) ***A rational understanding of one's own emotions and of the behaviour of the others***, combining the concept of affective self-awareness with the ability to solve affective problems, which arise within the relationships with the partners. These problems can be solved only by adopting proper attitudes. Managers who develop this quality are able to create, through communication, harmonic relationships and quality connections with the others, thus enhancing a positive, resonant environment within the organization.

b) ***Identifying the emotional problems of the dialogue partners***, by combining the paradigm of psychosocial characterization with the ability paradigm, supported by attitudes and engaged in nonverbal communication. In order to achieve this quality, managers struggle to create empathic connections to the others, showing real interest in them. They are able to voluntarily use different nonverbal clues, which communicate to the others the idea of appreciation.

c) ***A complex understanding of existence***, by combining skills related to social and emotional comprehension with empathy, an ability supported by attitudes. In order to create empathy, managers pay attention to verbal resonance, to the use of specific methods and techniques, which help them to create connections more easily. They send nonverbal signals which convey acceptance and lack of rejection or hostility in their professional relationships. When they create a relationship with the others, they use a flexible language, with no dogmatism, polarisation, sarcasm or dichotomization, showing people respect for what they are able to do.

Jean-Claude Abric defines empathy through its two essential elements: receptiveness towards the feelings of the others and a verbal capacity to communicate this comprehension.

The scientist claims that empathy should be transmitted to the others, otherwise it remains only an inner attitude, with little effect on the quality of communication (Abric, 2002, p.53).

K. Albrecht regards empathy as „a positive state of resonance”, which consists in identifying the feelings of the others and paying attention to them. If managers showed respect for the power of language, they would be better understood by their employees, would become more persuasive, would be able to make the others accept their point of view and, of course, they would inspire people to cooperate. Using a „clean” language (Albrecht, 2007, p. 150), with common terms,

neutral verbal models, phrases which invite to empathy and to the free exchange of ideas would lead to a more efficient communication and activity within the organization.

The fifth quality refers to *social skills*, that is *management of relationships and the efficient valorisation of social and affective relationships* with the entire environment. This quality includes:

a) Building optimal relationships with the others, by combining assertiveness with the ability to relate to specific individual or group situations, abilities which are both supported by attitudes. Success is highly dependent on communication within the educational institution and on the nature of the relationships created between its members. In order to build efficient relationships, school managers dedicate a certain amount of time getting to know their employees better, and building relationships which rely on trust. Successful managers have a high degree of interpersonal and communication skills: authenticity, empathy, support of others, insight and perspicacity, the ability to listen, which are all skills that are necessary in order to build and maintain relationships.

b) Building a suitable work environment, by overcoming any source of conflict and by combining the concept of conflict management with the ability to have a positive influence on the others and to lead teams and micro-groups in open contexts. This managerial leadership is conditioned by the attitudes of the manager. Those who develop this skill are able to create a work environment which is free from fear and anxiety, where trust and the free exchange of information are best realized.

The quality of communication within an organization depends on the quality of the relationships between its members and on the existence of relational contexts which can favour the free expression of one's feelings and receptiveness towards them. Communication skills thus rely on people's efficiency regarding interpersonal relationships, on the development of the elements of emotional intelligence which refer to social and affective relationships.

6. Conclusions

For the leadership of an organization, emotional education refers to the development of the skills related to the different aspects of the relationship with one's own self, with the fellow coworkers, with the environment and the collectivity. In order to achieve a high degree of emotional intelligence, managers and entrepreneurs have to pursue both personal development and social integration, inner balance and an efficient management of the needs and roles of every single employee within the organization.

There are some methods which ensure the development of the EI and which can be easily organized within the enterprise:

- Training sessions, like one-week seminars; meetings could focus on goals like changing habits or states of mind, getting to know oneself and the others better, accepting personal limits etc.
- Sophrology: improving skills like stress tolerance or impulse control
- Easier methods, which can help every individual develop a positive state of mind

All these methods of development of the EI are based on the assumption that every individual is different from the others, which is why a personalized approach, based on the individual growth, is essential.

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