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ISSN (Online) : 2455 - 3662

SJIF Impact Factor :3.395 (Morocco)

EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research

Volume: 2 Issue: 3 March 2016



**Published By :
EPRA Journals**

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METAEMOTION AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: UNDERSTANDING THEIR COMPLEMENTARY ASPECTS

Maria Pushpam, M.A¹

¹Research Scholar
Department of Education
Tamil University,
Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, India

Dr. Srinivasan, P²

²Assistant Professor
Department of Education
Tamil University,
Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, India

ABSTRACT

This article explores what Metaemotion and Emotional Intelligence are with an explanation of both the concepts. Their definitions are stated and their historical developments are explained. Furthermore, their contribution in the field of Psychology and Education, and their scope and development are highlighted. Special focus is laid on the components of Metaemotion and Emotional Intelligence that could help a person to acquire sufficient skills and knowledge on the two concepts. A comparison is also made on the different components of Metaemotion and Emotional Intelligence for a better understanding. Thus the complementary roles of the two concepts are explained in this article which could contribute further in assisting the enhancement of mental health and learning ability.

KEYWORDS: Metaemotion; Emotional intelligence, emotions,

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Emotional Intelligence and Metaemotion have emerged as major themes of research interest in the field of Psychology.

As Hunter, Katz and others observe in their research, during adolescence, a broad range of emotional and cognitive changes occur that may render adolescence a crucial time for the development of adaptive or maladaptive beliefs about emotions. As the adolescents grow in their cognitive capabilities, organization of thought and awareness of emotion becomes greater and they become more and more capable of reflecting on emotions, their acceptability and their rightful expression, and of evolving strategies for managing emotions. In other words, adolescents become equipped with the necessary tools for developing an organized set of reactions, thoughts, and feeling about emotion—what may be called a “metaemotion philosophy” (Hunter, Katz et al., 2011).

Metaemotion is "an organized and structured set of emotions and cognitions about the emotions, both one's own emotions and the emotions of others" (Gottman, Katz & Hooven, 1997)

This broad definition of meta-emotion sparked psychologists' interest in the topic, particularly regarding parental metaemotion philosophy.

Emotional Intelligence (EI), on the other hand too has attracted considerable research attention in India and has raised a great deal of interest in the field of psychology, management and education. Emotional Intelligence can be viewed as an ability that focuses on the interplay of emotions and intelligence. Mayer and Salovey (1997) state that emotional intelligence is a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own as well as others' emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this

information to guide one's thinking and action (Cited in Bajaj, G., & Shanwal, V.K., 2007).

Therefore an attempt is made here to understand these two concepts and find their complementarity in view of enhancing the learning process among school students.

2. METAEMOTIONS

2.1. Its origin:-

The term Metaemotion evolved in and through an extensive work of Gottmann on the concept of parents' awareness of their children's emotional lives and their attempts to make emotional connections with their children. Gottmann reviewed popular parenting guides and found that the overwhelming majority of these parenting guides were based on ensuring child discipline. However, one genre of parenting guides by Redl (1966) and Haim Ginott (1975) focused on children's emotions and on making immediate and everyday emotional connections with a child that is not critical or rebellious, but accepting. They also emphasized intervening with a child's strong negative emotions even as the child is going through those emotions. They also emphasized intervening directly with the child's conscious thoughts and actions. Gottmann et al's initial interest was around parents' awareness of their children's emotional lives and their attempts to make emotional connections with their children. This interest led to the development of a metaemotion interview (Katz & Gottman, 1986). Metaemotion may be a pervasive and an understudied dimension in emotion research. (Gottman, Katz and Hooven, 1996).

2.2. Scope of Metaemotion:-

Life is essentially a relationship between a living organism and its surroundings but it is permanently threatened and disturbed. The last decade has seen a steady rise of reports like desperation and recklessness among adolescents. More emotions are not always better as they lead to indulgence and diversion.

The truth about emotions is that if one doesn't express oneself in a responsible manner, he/she will find a way to express usually in an irresponsible way. Positive and negative emotions like joy, wonder, anger, fear, resentment, guilt, sadness and such feelings are all alright. There is nothing right or wrong about having those feelings. It's how these are expressed that matters. A person who becomes skilled in monitoring, directing, manipulating and coaching his own and other's emotions may acquire a well adjusted and pleasing personality.

Psychologists have examined the influence of metaemotion on how individuals interpret and deal with their own and others' emotions, much of the literature regarding metaemotion focuses on how parental metaemotion impacts the social-emotional development of their children.

Using metaemotion strategies may bring about positive outcomes in the personality development of the learners.

Metaemotion is considered a predictor of various indices of well-being and mental health. They also show that different sub-disciplines of psychology share the same basic understanding of the phenomenon. (Cited in Norman and Furnes, 2014).

2.3. Components of Metaemotion:-

Metaemotion encompasses both feelings and thoughts about emotion. According to Gottman et al. (1996), the term metaemotion does not merely refer to an individual's emotional reactions to his or her own situations, but refers also to the "executive functions of emotion". Greenberg (2002), suggested that metaemotion is to be considered a type of "secondary emotion," a temporal concept in which a secondary emotion follows a primary emotion. For example, anxiety (the secondary emotion) may follow anger (the primary emotion).

Metaemotion refers to emotions about emotion. Metaemotion refers to the idea that whenever a certain emotion is elicited, the subsequent emotions are also dealt with based on how the primary emotion is experienced. (Ferrari & Koyama, 2002).

According to a study made by Norman and Furnes (2014), Metaemotion as a general construct can be understood in terms of the interplay between three different classes of phenomena that correspond to three facets of metacognition presented before.

- a. Metaemotional experiences:
Metaemotion is often described as a "meta-level" experience, that is experiencing the ongoing experience, or experiences the ongoing emotion, with its phenomenological qualities being differentiated from those of the primary emotional experience. Even though we describe metaemotional experiences as emotional by nature, they are basically cognitive experiences. For example, a father who gets angry with his child may metaemotionally feel sad that he reacted in this way. In addition, he may also reflect upon why he reacted

with anger in the said situation. Though this may not be a case of emotion about emotion, instead a cognition about emotion, that difference between metaemotional or cognitive experience is not too well defined. (Norman and Furnes, 2014)

- b. **Metaemotional knowledge:** It is an organized set of thoughts about emotions. A subdivision of declarative metaemotional knowledge could be made between knowledge of one's own and others' emotions, general knowledge about emotions, knowledge about specific emotions, and knowledge about situational and behavioural factors that may influence a person's emotions. (Norman and Furnes, 2014)
- c. **Metaemotional strategies:** According to Bartsch et al. (2010), metaemotion may play a considerable role in those forms of emotional self-regulation that attempt to change the emotion itself. Metaemotional strategies involve the application of strategies for the control of current emotion. Gottman et al. (1997) in their research have identified three dimensions of parental metaemotion which include
 - a. Awareness of one's own emotions
 - b. Awareness of the child's emotions
 - c. Coaching of the child's emotion. (cited in Wong Ming Yan, 2010)

Wong Ming Yan quotes the contribution of Yeh (2002) who extended the interpretation of meta-emotion beyond feeling and cognition to behaviours. Yeh (2002) as further divided and labelled the components of metaemotion into six finer dimensions.

- a. **Awareness:**
It refers to knowing what emotion is present and whether one can be sensitive to and accurately identify one's own or other's emotions.
- b. **Acceptability:**
It refers to respecting and accepting one's emotions and believing that the referred emotion has meaning and importance in life.
- c. **Communication:**
It refers to the willingness to communicate with the other about emotion-related matters.
- d. **Causality:**

It refers to the understanding of the reasons behind one's own or other's emotions.

- e. **Manipulation:**
It refers to the way one intervenes in one's own or other's emotional behaviours.
- f. **Coaching:**
It refers to teaching appropriate ways to express emotions responsibly. (cited in Wong Ming Yan, 2010)

3. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI)

3.1. Its origin:-

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has been brought to limelight by the path-breaking work of Daniel Goleman (1995). In his book "Emotional Intelligence" he explains how managing emotions is crucial for everyone and in a very special way for better performance of children and other learners. Goleman popularized the concept of Emotional Intelligence speaking at length of its components which include self-control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself. (Goleman, 1995).

Though the concept of EI gained ground by the end of the twentieth century, its origin can be traced back to the traditional philosophical discourses. With earlier researches EI is known to have its roots in the various works carried out to explain and define intelligence. Thorndike (1920) gave the phrase "social intelligence", which was defined as "the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls – to act wisely in human relations". Wechsler's (1940) definition of intelligence emphasized the "non-intellective" constituents of intelligence (Cited in Singh & Koteswari, 2006).

Sternberg and Salovey have taken a wider view of intelligence, trying to reinvent it in terms of what it takes to lead life successfully. Further, Goleman (1995) quotes that IQ offers little to explain the different destinies of people with roughly equal promises, schooling, and opportunity. Academic intelligence does not do much to stand by one in dealing with the problems and possibilities that life's vicissitudes offer him or her. People with well-developed emotional skills are more likely to be content and effective in their lives, mastering the habits of mind that affect their own productivity; people who cannot marshal some control over their emotional life fight inner battles that sabotage their ability for focused work and clear thought. (Goleman, 1995).

3.2. Scope of Emotional Intelligence:-

Understanding the concept of Emotional Intelligence involves exploring and understanding the two components: namely, emotion and

intelligence. Since the eighteenth century, Psychologists have recognized a three part division of the mind as cognition (or thought), the affect (including emotion) and motivation (or conation). While intelligence is typically used by Psychologists to characterize how the cognitive sphere functions, Emotional Intelligence connects emotions with intelligence characterizing the affective sphere of emotional functioning. It refers to heightened emotional or mental abilities. Questions were raised in terming emotional intelligence as social intelligence because of its focus on people's skills in relating to one another. But emotional intelligence had to be distinguished from traits and talents. Thus Emotional Intelligence as a mental skill (eg. being able to figure out one's own or other's emotions) was distinguished from preferred ways of behaving (eg. being sociable or warm).

Furthermore, an issue was raised as to whether there exists emotional achievement and emotional competence that could be measured and compared just as the academic intelligence and academic competence could be. Emotional achievement represents the learning a person has attained about emotions and emotional competence refers to the level of achievement. Analogous to such concepts, emotional intelligence represents the core aptitude or ability to reason with emotions. Hence, the ideas of emotional intelligence, emotional achievement and emotional competencies could be understood together, one in relation to the others. (Mayer and Salovey, 1997)

With the emergence of a discussion on Emotional Quotient (EQ) from the erstwhile Intelligence Quotient (IQ), and the further development of the notion of Spiritual Quotient (SQ), there are some fast emerging aspects of major scientific study as these directly correlate to a person's self awareness and consciousness. While human beings have five senses, Spirituality is the ability to recognize that there is intelligence beyond five senses. And this intelligence creates and governs everything within and beyond the worlds we know. We can surrender to this supreme intelligence through: awareness (also known as mindfulness), contemplation (self enquiry), and prayer (dedication). (Cited in wikipedia.org)

3.3 Components of Emotional Intelligence:-

Based on extensive research, Goleman (1998) has proposed five dimensions of Emotional Intelligence consisting of 25 components namely,

- a. Self-awareness:

Self-awareness is the ability to look at self, to recognize and understand one's own moods, emotions, drives as well as their effects on others. People who have high degree of self awareness easily recognize how their feelings affect them and their performance, as well as how it affects others. The components of this domain are, (a) Emotional Awareness; (b) Accurate self assessment; (c) Self Confidence.

- b. Regulation:

Self Regulation refers to the integrity to work within the strengths while focusing to work on weaknesses, consciously reviewing behaviours before action. It is the ability to manage one's own impulses and moods. The components of this domain are, (a) Self-Control; (b) trustworthiness; (c) Conscientiousness, (d) Adaptability; (e) Innovation.

- c. Motivation:

Motivation is the ability to pursue the goals with energy, persistence and purpose. It refers to the emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals. The components of this domain are, (a) Achievement Drive; (b) Commitment; (c) Initiative; (d) Optimism

- d. Empathy:

It is the ability to understand others behaviour. It is the ability to understand and accept different viewpoints, feelings, motives and behaviours without losing individuality. The components of this domain are, (a) Understanding Others; (b) Developing Others; (c) Service Orientation; (d) Leveraging Diversity; (e) Political Awareness

- e. Social Skills:

It is the ability to manage and build upon relationships. Those who manage their relationship with a wide spectrum of people generally turn out to be very influential. The components of this domain are, (a) Influence; (b) Communication; (c) Conflict Management; (d) Leadership; (e) Change Catalyst; (f) Building Bonds; (g) Collaboration and Cooperation; (h) Team Capabilities. (The part on components Cited from Srinivasan P. & Pazhanivelu G., 2011).

4. METAEMOTION VS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

A comparison of metaemotion and emotional intelligence can throw light on the significant contribution they both make in the field of education.

The most prominent difference between the two concepts could be that emotional intelligence refers to a person's relatively stable characteristics, whether defined in terms of "trait" or "ability" (Mayer et al., 2008). Whereas in metaemotion, each component may be seen as involving an interplay between the trait and the state (Cited in Norman and Furnes, 2014).

While Emotional Intelligence refers to the knowledge of one's emotions, others' emotions, and the most effective way of handling those, metaemotion refers to awareness of one's primary emotion, and in relation to it the secondary emotions that come into play.

Analysing the various components that could help in the emotional growth of students, a noteworthy difference can be taken note of. While both ME and EI basically highlight the significance of the awareness of one's emotions, EI goes a step further in inspiring the individual towards working on a self assessment leading to self knowledge and self confidence where the concerned person comes to know his strengths and limits and grows in a strong sense of one's self-worth and capabilities.

Metaemotion talks about handling of emotions where the intervention for expressed emotion is considered for one self understanding and self enhancement. In Emotional Intelligence, much consideration is given to Empathy which is the ability to read others' feelings, needs and concerns.

Coaching deserves a special place within the phenomenon of metaemotion, as it enables and helps one to handle any emotion and learn appropriate ways of expressing it. In Emotional Intelligence, social skills gain importance as the need and the ability to build rapport, manage relationships with the acquired emotional knowledge, being influential among one's peers, matter much.

5.CONCLUSION

Metaemotions and Emotional Intelligence, both help learners to be self conscious of their traits, abilities and responsibilities, making their own decisions and acquiring the skills to solve their problem situations. Handling situations, facing crisis, balancing between goals and persons, prioritising various elements in life, planning between achievements and relationships, leaning to refrain from compromising both personal goals and

interpersonal aspirations, responding to challenges of life and dealing conflicts, are today important traits towards which, a holistic learning should enable a person. Stress and Conflicts are very many today wherever more than one are involved. Metaemotions and Emotional Intelligence are concepts, understanding which we would be by far equipped in handling a person's, especially an adolescent's growth in the process of learning.

Metaemotion and Emotional Intelligence are no doubt complementary aspects. Both the conceptual frameworks are highly essential for enhancing the growth of learners. They comprehend growth as inclusive of balanced relationships, proportionate academic achievements and competent performance. A study, such as the present can enhance the process of enabling growth and influence the students' mental health, learning abilities and performance level and bring about positive results. There is a great scope for further research in this field, making metaemotion and emotional intelligence crucial elements of consideration towards studying and enhancing the process of enabling learners.

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