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# Philosophy of Emotional Intelligence

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## Abstract

The philosophy of emotional intelligence delves into the profound implications of emotional intelligence on personal development, interpersonal relationships, and society as a whole. The critical reflection of the aspects of emotional intelligence can be put on account of the different epistemological perspectives, reflecting the maturity of the concept. There is a need to find consistent empirical evidence for the dimensionality of emotional intelligence and to develop appropriate methods for its correct and useful measurement. A concern of researchers is whether emotional intelligence is a theory of personality, a form of intelligence, or a combination of both. Many studies consider emotional intelligence to be a personal factor associated with competence. But most researchers consider emotional intelligence as an emotional awareness of oneself and others, in addition to professional efficiency and emotional management.

**Keywords:** philosophy, emotional intelligence, emotions, intelligence. Immanuel Kant, wisdom

## Filosofia inteligenței emoționale

### Rezumat

Filosofia inteligenței emoționale se adâncește în implicațiile profunde ale inteligenței emoționale asupra dezvoltării personale, a relațiilor interpersonale și a societății în ansamblu.

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Reflectarea critică a aspectelor inteligenței emoționale poate fi pusă pe seama diferitelor perspective epistemologice, reflectând maturitatea conceptului. Este nevoie de a găsi dovezi empirice consistente pentru dimensionalitatea inteligenței emoționale și de a dezvolta metode adecvate pentru măsurarea corectă și utilă a acesteia. O preocupare a cercetătorilor este dacă inteligența emoțională este o teorie a personalității, o formă de inteligență sau o combinație a ambelor. Multe studii consideră inteligența emoțională un factor personal asociat cu competența. Dar majoritatea cercetătorilor consideră inteligența emoțională ca o conștientizare emoțională a sinelui și a celorlalți, pe lângă eficiența profesională și managementul emoțional.

**Cuvinte cheie:** filosofie, inteligența emoțională, emoții, inteligență. Immanuel Kant, înțelepciune

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### Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI), a concept introduced by psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer in 1990 (Mayer and Salovey 1993) (Salovey and Mayer 2016) and popularized by Daniel Goleman (Goleman 1995), has since gained significant recognition and importance in various aspects of human life. It represents an individual's ability to perceive, understand, manage, and utilize emotions in oneself and others. The philosophy of emotional intelligence delves into the

profound implications of emotional intelligence on personal development, interpersonal relationships, and society as a whole.

A concept adjacent to emotional intelligence, *apatheia*, often incompletely translated by apathy and incorrectly by indifference, was considered by the Stoics as a state of mind not disturbed by passions, being seen as a quality that characterized the philosophical wisdom. Aristotle considers virtue to be the fair middle way between excess and deficiency of emotion (*metropathia*), implying the management of emotional or selfish reactions to external events that cannot be controlled. For the Stoics, *apatheia* was the optimal rational response to a reality caused by the will of others or by nature and which cannot be controlled. Only his own will can be controlled, through correct (virtuous) judgments and actions, experiencing contentment (*eudaimonia*) and good feelings (*eupatheia*). Seneca also affirms the importance of virtue in our own happiness, to "win the way to victory in all our struggles, – for the reward is... virtue, steadfastness of soul, and a peace that is won for all time." (Seneca 1917, chap. Lxxviii 13-16) Pironism states that through *epoché* (suspension of judgment) the mind is brought to *ataraxia*, a state of soul balance. As in Stoicism and Epicureanism, *eudaimonia* is the pyronistic goal of life and all three philosophies have placed it in ataxia or *apatheia*.

### **Understanding Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence is often described as a set of competencies that enable individuals to navigate the complex terrain of human emotions. It can be broken down into four primary components:

- *Self-awareness*: This component involves recognizing and understanding one's own emotions, strengths, weaknesses, values, and goals. It's the foundation upon which the other components of EI are built.

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- *Self-regulation*: Self-regulation refers to the ability to manage and control one's emotions and impulses. It allows individuals to remain calm under pressure, adapt to change, and maintain a sense of balance in their lives.
- *Social awareness*: Social awareness involves the capacity to understand and empathize with the emotions of others. This skill helps in perceiving the emotional needs of people in your environment and responding appropriately.
- *Relationship management*: This is the ability to effectively manage relationships by using empathy, effective communication, conflict resolution, and collaborative problem-solving. It's crucial for building and maintaining healthy connections with others.

Kant distinguished three types of "actions" (Müller-Merbach 2007) for which he develops

three types of intelligence:

1. *Technical intelligence* (Kant: *skill*) is required for technical actions. Technical intelligence cannot be measured precisely by intelligence tests. It is an indicator of how well one understands objects. Technical intelligence must refer to specific areas of tasks. Technical intelligence is important for almost any position on the labor market.
2. *Emotional intelligence* (Kant: *pragmatism*) was largely ignored before 1995. The core of emotional intelligence is self-control. He was highlighted by the Chinese philosophers Confucius (Confucius 2013, bk. XIII) and Lao-Tzu in Daoism, (Tzu 1992, chap. 33) but also by the Greek and Roman philosophers Seneca (4 BC - 65), (Seneca 1917) Epictetus (50-138), (Epictetus 1928) and Emperor Marcus Aurelius (120-181). (Marcus Aurelius et al. 1990) Epictetus states that: "No man is free who is not master of himself" (Epictetus 1928, 477) and that "Some things are under our control, while others are not under our control." (Epictetus 1928, 483) Goleman (Goleman 1996) and Steiner (Steiner and Perry 1997) argue the importance of self-control on the basis of current empirical experience. Emotional intelligence is based on humanism, human relationships, and social responsibility. Emotional intelligence involves the ability to understand other people, to cooperate and to influence them.
3. *Ethical intelligence* (Kant: *wisdom*) involves many ethical doctrines that offer partially opposite advice, such as teleological ethics versus deontological ethics, normative versus descriptive ethics or normative versus intuitive ethics. In addition, many objective ethical concepts are competing.

### **The Philosophical Implications of Emotional Intelligence**

- *Human Flourishing*: The philosophy of emotional intelligence highlights the role of EI in fostering human flourishing. It posits that self-awareness and self-regulation lead to a deeper understanding of one's values and aspirations, enabling individuals to pursue a life aligned with their true selves. Moreover, social awareness and relationship management enhance the quality of human interactions and cooperation, ultimately contributing to a more harmonious society.
- *Ethics and Morality*: Emotional intelligence is closely linked to ethical decision-making. By recognizing the emotions of others and having a strong sense of empathy, individuals with high EI are more likely to make morally sound choices. This philosophy underscores the importance of EI in fostering ethical behavior and societal well-being.

- *Leadership and Social Change*: Leaders with high emotional intelligence can inspire and guide others effectively. They can create inclusive environments that foster collaboration, innovation, and positive change. The philosophy of EI emphasizes the role of emotionally intelligent leaders in shaping a more compassionate and just society.
- *Mental Health and Well-being*: Emotional intelligence has a profound impact on mental health. By helping individuals manage their emotions and stress effectively, it promotes psychological well-being. The philosophical aspect of this suggests that a society that values and cultivates emotional intelligence is one that prioritizes the mental health of its citizens.
- *Resilience and Adaptation*: EI encourages resilience and adaptability in the face of adversity. The philosophy of EI emphasizes that emotional intelligence enables individuals and societies to weather challenges and change more effectively, leading to growth and transformation.

For Kant, technical and pragmatic action are subordinate to ethical action, and the categorical imperative is superior to the two hypothetical imperatives of technical and pragmatic action. It follows that ethical intelligence will be considered superior to technical (skill) and emotional (pragmatic) intelligence. Ethics will provide the final judgment. But the wide variety of ethical concepts makes it difficult to accept the superiority of ethical intelligence over other intelligences. (Kant, Walker, and Meredith 2008)

The critical reflection of the aspects of emotional intelligence (EI) can be put on account of the different epistemological perspectives, reflecting a maturity of the concept. (Meleis 1998) Chan and Latham stressed the need to find consistent empirical evidence for the dimensionality of EI and to develop appropriate methods for its correct and useful measurement. (Sue-Chan and Latham 2004)

A concern of researchers is whether EI is a theory of personality, a form of intelligence, or a combination of both. Many studies consider EI to be a personal factor associated with competence. (Spence, Oades, and Caputi 2004) But most researchers consider EI as an emotional awareness of oneself and others, in addition to professional efficiency and emotional management. According to Dulewicz and Higgs, EI is considered a capacity at the ontological level including

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personal and social competence, (Dulewicz and Higgs 2000) which promotes a positive state of mind despite environmental demands, (Cummings, Hayduk, and Estabrooks 2005) and which helps to solve problems related to both emotional and cognitive abilities. (Ciarrochi, Dean, and Anderson 2002) It is also considered that EI has an inherent potential to be further developed and refined through reflection, thus promoting emotional and intellectual growth. (Caruso, Mayer, and Salovey 2002) Spence sees emotional intelligence from a public health perspective as an adaptive ability that promotes well-being. (Spence, Oades, and Caputi 2004)

The EI critique addresses the limitations of empirical research and unsubstantiated generalizations, (Fineman 2004) considering that ontological and epistemological assumptions determine the research methodologies. (Monti and Tinggen 1999) It is now considered that the only way that "emotions" can be identified is through measurements and quantifications related to the methods of descriptive and statistical analysis, using different methods of self-reporting and psychometric measurements. (Fineman 2004) Recommendations have been made regarding the application of qualitative approaches in future research within EI. (Sue-Chan and Latham 2004)

Effective and creative manipulation of emotions is a gateway to a type of self-knowledge that leads to the freedom to be authentic in oneself at any given time. (Hammer and 常二 1999) In this context, an essential question is whether the EI phenomenon can more clearly articulate humanist existentialism in relation to the healthcare discipline. (Dulewicz and Higgs 2000)

Emotional intelligence is considered an ability at the ontological level, important for promoting positive moods independent of the environment. (Cummings, Hayduk, and Estabrooks 2005) Cummings's work places perception and cognition in the context of adaptive human endeavors to effect change in oneself and in one's own environment. (Dai and Sternberg 2004) According to Dulewicz and Higgs, future epistemological studies of EI will approach EI

conceptualization as a starting point for theoretical development, philosophical support structures for different conceptualizations of EI for methodological and theoretical purposes, and EI in the context of developing professional knowledge. (Dulewicz and Higgs 2000) EI is a human state that encompasses *a priori* potentialities, updated as emotional experiences.

Wisdom is the ability to think and act using knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense and intuition. It is associated with attributes such as judgment, emotions (Grossmann 2017) and virtues. (Staudinger and Glück 2011) (Walsh 2015) In this regard, empirical scientists have begun to focus on the role of emotions in wisdom, (Kunzmann and Glück 2019) agreeing that emotions are essential for the efficient management of complex situations that demand wisdom. An important finding relates to the positive relationship between the diversity of emotional experience and wise reasoning, independent of emotional intensity. (Grossmann, Oakes, and Santos 2019)

### **Conclusion**

The philosophy of emotional intelligence highlights its profound implications for personal growth, ethics, leadership, mental health, and societal well-being. As we continue to understand and value the importance of emotional intelligence, we can work towards creating a more compassionate and harmonious world. In a society that acknowledges the philosophy of emotional intelligence, individuals are empowered to develop their emotional competencies, resulting in improved self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and relationship management, which can ultimately lead to a more fulfilling and ethically sound existence.

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