

How Ethical Are Emotionally Intelligence People?

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence has become an interesting discussion in organizational behavior field since it was introduced in 1989. A lot of researches have proven that this type of ability is important in shaping someone's attitudes and behaviors. Nevertheless, only few studies have inquired the effect of emotional intelligence on how good or bad people's attitudes and behavior. Thus, this research tried to find out the connection between emotional intelligence and morality. The participants of this research are 149 Management and Accounting program students of Economics and Business Faculty in Jenderal Soedirman University. More explanation about our result and implications are followed at the end of this article.

Keywords

Emotional Intelligence, Morality, Moral Reasoning, Machiavellianism

INTRODUCTION

Idea to connect the concept of emotion and morality has been largely studied since two decades ago. However, notion about the relationship of emotional intelligence and morality has never been popular in organizational behaviour domain, even though those variables has been separately discussed in a huge amount of textbooks. That fact implies certain organizational behaviour areas that are still interesting to be connected in a research.

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development have added a great contribution in the work ethics domain. Though his theory does not mention emotion in its morality concept, a number of researchers has proven that emotion has a significant role in moral judgment. One of the researchers is Green, *et al.* (2001) who used fMRI (functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging) to investigate human brain. They found that emotional areas inside volunteers' brains became active when they faced certain moral dilemma cases. Likewise, Eisenberg (2000) dan Pizarro dan Salovey (2002) stated that there are particular emotions which are able to affect one's morality (e.g. anger, shame, guilty and empathy). Those emotions may stimulate someone to conduct moral behaviors (e.g. aggression, admitting and mending mistakes, protecting, and giving help).

Moral emotion refers to emotions that may trigger moral behaviors (behaviors which are allied with moral values). Haidt (2003) divided

moral emotion into three categories, which are the other-condemning family (contempt, anger, and disgust), the self-conscious family (shame, embarrassment, and guilt), the other-suffering family (compassion), and the other-praising family (gratitude and elevation). This idea has clearly related the concept of morality and emotion in the field of behavioral science.

The Affective Even Theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), explains that emotions, aroused by emotional events, can shape behaviour whether good or bad. In more specific statement, Robbins dan Judge (2013) explained that negative emotions (e.g. envy, anger and hatred) might lead to deviant behaviour. Relationship between emotional condition and morality has been well-defined. Thus, the question: "Is people ability in recognizing, managing and expressing emotion (emotional intelligence) related to their morality?" appears more appealing to be discussed, due to lack of research about it.

However, an ongoing debate on the dark side of emotional intelligence has been sounded since many years ago. On one perspective, emotional intelligence is considered good, because it enables a person to understand his own and other feelings and express empathy (Salovey & Mayer, 1989). Pizarro dan Salovey (2002) asserted that emotion is an important aspect in moral development and judgment; in the other word, emotional intelligence can facilitate someone to be a moral person. A

research by Athota, O’Cormor dan Jackson (2009) has proven that emotional intelligence influence moral reasoning through personality variable. On the opposite viewpoint, Grant (2014) argue that emotionally intelligence people are able to manipulate others’ feeling. Similarly, Kilduff, Chiaburu, dan Menges (2010) believe that high-emotional intelligence persons are capable of pretending and manipulating emotions in implementing their strategy for selfish purposes.

Regarding to the reseach background above, this research was intended to investigate the correlation between emotional intelligence and morality. We used Machiavellianism and moral reasoning as proxies of morality to grasp the relationship. 149 business students are involved as participants of this organizational behavior resaerch. We consider classrooms as “micro” organizations because they consist of multiple individual, have structure, and work toward their learning goals.

Morality

Moral Reasoning

This research refers to Kolberg’s Moral Development Theory which is inspired by Piaget’s conception of moral reasoning in 1932. Kolberg (1977) defined moral reasoning as judgement to determine whether something is right or wrong. He devided human’s moral development into three levels, which are pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional.

Preconvetional level comprises two stages. First, the punishment-and-obedience orientation (stage 1), where people in this stage tend to consider physical or material consequences in making moral judgment (e.g. a student does not cheat because he wants to avoid penalty of doing so from the faculty). Second, the instrumental-relativist orientation (stage 2), where an action is considered right if it can be utilized for achieving someones’s needs and goals (e.g. a student cheat to get an Xbox for a good mark from his father)

At conventional level, conformity and loyalty to family, group or nation expectation is highly-valued. This level consists of two stages. First, the interpersonal concordance orientation (stage 3), where good behaviors are the ones which satisfy others (e.g. someone does not cheat to be considered as a good student). Second, Law-and-order orientation (stage 4), where right behaviors is

consistent with fixed rules and laws (e.g. a student does not cheat because the rules said so)

People with postconventional moral reasoning tend not to relate their moral judgement to rules, law, authority, and others’ expectation. This level of moral reasoning has two stages. First, the social-contract orientation (stage 5), where an action is believed as a good deed if it is congruent with standards which are constructed by the society (e.g. a student cheats to make sure no one’s right is violated). Second, universal-ethical-principle orientation (stage 6), where people in this stage link his decisions about right or wrong to moral principles which are rational, consistent and universal (e.g. a student does not cheat because the behavior does not meet his moral principles).

Morality should be manifested into behaviour, unfortunately, research that connect morality and behaviour have never been resulting consistent conclutions. A number of researches found a relationship between moral reasoning and ethical behaviors Cohn, Bucolo, Rebellon, & Van Gundy, 2010) and *citizenship behavior* (Ryan, 2001). Meanwhile, other research showed more complex result because the relationship seems unlikely to be significant without being mediated (West, Ravenscroft, & Shrader, 2004) and moderated (Leming, 1978) by other variables, such as threat and supervision.

Machiavellianism

In their writing, Jones dan Paulhus (2009) explained that the word “Machiavellianism” is derived from Nicollo Machiavelli’s name. He was a politic advisor of Medici dynasty in Florence, Italy. In 1513, he released his book entitled “The Prince” about how to achieve and maintain political power. The principles that he explained in the book encompass manipulation tactics, for instance, ingratiating and deceiving. Eventhough this concept has been introduced since hundred years ago, the phenomenon remains existing in modern society. Therefore, Christie *et al.* (1970) developed a measurement of Machiavellians’ characteristics and define them as persons who view and manipulate others for their own interest. Daft (2008) considered that principles held by Machiavellians are the opposite of ethical principles. That statement is in line with Christie’s description of machiavellians’ characteristics. First, machiavellians view others as objects that

can be manipulated for their own advantages. Thus, they tend not to involve emotion in interpersonal relationship. Second, machiavellians override morality. They use techniques that may disregard values which are respected by the society, such as lying and cheating.

A number of research have proven the relationship between Machiavellianism and attitude toward cheating (Elias, 2015; Bloodgood, Tumley, & Mudrack, 2010); and between Machiavellianism and unethical behavior (Hegarty & Sims, 1978). Therefore, in this research Machiavellianism is regarded as the proxy of morality.

Emotional intelligence

In their article, Salovey dan Mayer (1990) defined emotional intelligence (EI) as an ability to monitor self and others' emotions, to distinguish them and to use the emotional information as a guidance in thinking and behaving. On the other word, EI is an ability to accurately and efficiently use emotional information, including the capability of recognizing, assessing, managing and using the information to resolve various problems in life.

Goleman (2001) developed EI dimensions (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) which he claimed as requirements to be success at work. Bar-On (2002) devided EI into 5 parts (intrapersonal ability, interpersonal ability, stress management, adaptability, and general mood). Meanwhile, Schutte *et al.* (1998) and Wong & Law (2002) established EI measurements grounded from the instrument that had been constructed by Salovey & Meyer (1990), which consists of 5 aspects: *appraisal and expression of emotions in self, appraisal of others' emotions, regulation of emotions in self, regulation of emotions in others, utilization of emotions.*

Appraisal And Expression Of Emotion

Ability in accurately assessing emotions helps us to be able to determine the right emotional expression. Two components of this dimension are explained below.

Self. Emotionally intelligent individuals can respon and express their own feeling appropriately. It is because they are capable of assessing their feeling accurately. On the other words, people who understand their own emotions tend to be better in responding and expressing emotions if they are compared to others who do not have such

ability. This component seems parallel with intrapersonal ability aspect of emotional intelligence developed by Bar-On (2002).

Other. An ability in recognizing others emotional reactions and empathetic response to those reactions are a component of EI. The ability facilitate someone to accurately assess others emotional reactions and decide the right behavioural response. Persons with this ability are usually viewed as warm and decent individual. Otherwise, people who are unable to express appropriate respons of others emotional reactions use to be considered impolite and rude.

Regulation Of Emotion

This ability enables someone to strengthen and adapt his mood appropriately. Emotionally intelligent people are capable of managing emotions in two perspectives:

In self. Emotionally intelligence persons tend to be able to maintain positive moods and avoid the negative ones. For instance, when someone experience bad mood, he relates his bad moment to his prior pleasant experiences, or uses informations about others' triumphs, or tries to be grateful. Nevertheless, they are also able to enhance and express negative moods in an appropriate way in certain situations. For instance, someone uses mood-regulation to show empathy and help others (altruism behaviours).

In other. Emotional intelligence contains capacity to regulate and change other's affective reactions; for example, an orator who are able to stimulate emotional reaction of his audience and a job applicant who realise that punctuality and apparel may create positive impression. However, the ability to regulate others' emotion is also regarded as the darkside of emotional intelligence. It is claimed that this ability enables people (e.g. Hitler) to influence others by manipulating their emotions for their own interests (Grant, 2014).

Utilization Of Emotion. Everyone has various techniques in utilising their emotions to resolve life problems. It is important to remember that moods and emotions may influence humans' strategies of problem solving. First, emotional change is helpful in making flexible plans for the future. People who experience positive moods tend to perceive that positive events or outcomes will occure and become reluctant to anticipate negative possibilities, and vice versa. Mood change allow human to take various possible

events or outcomes into account. Second, positive emotions may generate a good memory organization, thus, humans' cognitive system can be integrated well. This advantage is beneficial when we strive to dig creative ideas. Third, emotions enable human to concentrate and make priority. Certain emotions assist us to redirect our attention from mixed up feelings and thoughts, and to emphasize significant matters.

Hypothesis

Emotional Intelligence and Morality

The concept of moral emotions makes us realize that there are particular emotions (e.g. anger, guilt, compassion and shame) which may trigger humans to conduct moral behaviour (Haidt, 2003). Those emotions contribute to the manifestation of believed moral standard into behaviors (Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007). Related to moral emotions, someone's capability to empathize is a part of appraisal and expression of emotions ability, which is encompassed by emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1989). Besides, emotionally intelligent persons is also able to handle their feeling; hence they can muffle negative emotions (Mauss, Cook, & Gross, 2007), such as anger and hostility, and forbear from conducting behaviors related to them, such as aggression. Accordingly, those abilities signify the relationship between emotional intelligence and morality.

In fact, most of related research proved that moral emotions affect moral behavior better than moral reasoning (Haidt, 1995). At a glance, cognitive process seems unrelated to emotions, but nevertheless, the significant roles of emotions in the process can not be denied. Salovey and Mayer (1989) stated that the ability of recognizing, managing and utilizing emotions, which are comprised in emotional intelligence, support humans' thinking process in problem solving. We can learn from a well-known research of Damasio *et al.* (1994) about a person, named Pineas Gage, a railway project leader who suffered brain injury that made him losing his emotional ability. In general, his cognitive ability was not disturbed. He was capable of solving mathematical cases as he used to be. Nonetheless, his friends and relatives asserted that he had changed to be a hot-headed and apathetic person who was really terrible in making decision. Therefore, hypothesis of this research was built as follow:

H1: Emotional intelligence is related to moral reasoning.

H2: Emotional intelligence is related to Machiavellianism.

RESEARCH METHODS

Respondents in this research are 149 students of accounting and management in Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia. 72 students have completed their Business Ethics class, while the rest of them have never take the class. Data are collected using questionnaires distributed into 4 classrooms. In examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and morality (moral reasoning and Machiavellianism), we used correlation analysis, instead of regression method. It is because variables in this research do not imply causal relationship. In other words, one variable can not be counted as a predictor of other variables.

Measurements

Three instruments used in this research are as follow:

Wong-Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS)

Students' emotional intelligence is measured by 16-items scale in WLEIS which was developed by Wong and Law (2002). The scale has four aspects, i.e. Self-Emotion Appraisal (SEA), Uses of Emotion (UOE), regulation of emotion (ROE), and Others' Emotion Appraisal (OEA). Those aspects' reliability was examined and results of coefficient alpha are 0.79, 0.85, 0.88 and 0.91, respectively. Furthermore, this instrument has 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 (totally disagree) up to 7 (totally agree).

Defining Issues Test 2.0 (DIT-2)

Independent variable in this research is individuals' morality which is represented by moral reasoning and Machiavellianism. Moral reasoning was measured using DIT-2 developed by Rest (1979). This measurement is grounded from Kolberg's Moral Development Theory. The instrument contains five case scenarios of ethical dilemmas. Each scenario is followed by 12 statements which embody Kohlberg's moral development stage 2 – 6. After rating the statements, respondents were asked to rank four most important statement in making moral decision on each case.

We employed N2 index in DIT-2 which is derived from 5 items of questions. This is the newest index in the test and is claimed as a better index than P score because it is

proven to have higher construct validity (Bebeau & Thoma, 2003). This index take the items of P score (represents stage 2 and 3) and PI (represents stage 5 and 6) into account. Besides, Center for the Study of Ethical Development also used ranking and rating data in calculating the index, while other indexes (PI, Maintaining Norms, and P score) only use rating data. Coefficient Alpha, obtained from reliability test of its 5 items, was 0.60. If we compare with other indexes, the highest Coefficient Alpha belongs to this index (PI = 0.43, Maintaining Norms = 0.19, P score = 0.57).

Apparently, the reliability of moral development instrument in this research is rather low. That reality is consistent with a research by Simishu (2004) on Brazilian respondents which coefficient alpha was 0.34. He rasonalized that the issue might be caused by respondents' ability in understanding the stories, intructions and statements on the distributed questionnaires. Eventhough they had been translated into Portuguese, the respondents possibly found a problem in interpreting the expressions used in the questionnaires.

Tavakol dan Dennick (2011) stated that alpha coefficient might be underestimated as a concequence of low inter-relatedness, which is related to poor internal consistency, and too small number of questions. Furthermore, they also explained that the inter-relatedness problem can be detected through correlation analysis between items and total scores. Corellation analysis results in Table 1 shows that item scores are significantly correlated to total scores of each index. It indicates that the low alpha coefficient may be caused by issues other than poor internal consistency.

MACH-4

This research used the instrument developed by Christie *et al.* (1970) to measure Machiavellianism, named MACH-4. Questions in this instrument consist of 20 items classified into three domains, ei. nine questions about tactics, three questions about morality, and nine questions about views. This human characteristic was measured using 7 points Likert- type scale (1=totally disagree, 7= totally agree). Alpha coefficient from conducted reliability test was 0.68.

Table 1. Items and Total Score Corellation

Item	Personal Interest	Main. Norms	Post conv	N2
Item 1	0,655**	0,340**	0,623**	0,648**
Item 2	0,511**	0,530**	0,429**	0,578**
Item 3	0,316**	0,485**	0,679**	0,654**
Item 4	0,545**	0,566**	0,576**	0,559**
Item 5	0,653**	0,496**	0,684**	0,662**

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Corellation analysis results in Table 2 indicates that emotional intelligence is not significantly correlated to moral reasoning ($r = -0,110$, SPSS *P score* = 0,182). Therefore, we can conclude that high emotional intelligent people do not always have high level of morality, and vice versa. Thus, our first hypothesis is rejected.

However, correlation analysis result of Machiavellianism and emotional intelligence presented in Table 1 shows a significant negative relationship ($r = -0,267$, SPSS *P score* = 0,001). The fact indicates that someone who has high emotional intelligence tends to have low Machiavellianism, and vice versa. This result supports our second hypothesis.

Table 2. Emotional Intelligence and Morality Corellations

No	Proxies of Morality	Correlation Coef
1	N2 score (Moral Reasoning)	-0,110
2	Machiavellianism	-0,267**

CONCLUSION

A Result of this research points out that students' emotional intelligence does not significantly relate to their moral reasoning. The result of statistical test indicates that high emotional intelligence people do not always be in the high stage of moral development (morally mature). Goleman (2014) explained that emotional intelligence is an important aspect of human social life, yet it is not the only way out to be a good person. Consistently, Pizarro dan Salovey (2002) stated that emotional intelligence is not one remedy for all kinds of moral disease, there are various abilities that are required to be a complete individual.

Emotional intelligence was founded has a significant inverse relationship with Machiavellianism. It means that people who own high emotional intelligence tend to be far from Machiavellianism. The result confirms a number of research (Al Aiin, Carre, Hauwel, Baudouin, & Richard, 2013; Ali, Amorim, &

Premuzic, 2009; Wai & Tiliopoulos, 2012; Loftus & Glenwick, 2001) which found empathic deficit among machiavellians, whereas empathy is a substansial part of emotional intelligence. Machiavelians have the heart to manipulate and exploit others for their interest, eventhough they possibly pretend to be sympathetic.

The evidence of negative relationship between emotional intelligence and Machiavellianism is in line with some previous research (Austin, Farrelly, Black, & Moore, 2007; Barlow, Qualter, & Stylianou, 2010; Petrides, Vernon, Schermer, & Vaselka, 2011). Aparently, these consistent foundings disprove the idea about the darkside of emotional intelligence. Although people with high emotional intelligence have ability to regulate others' emotion, they are far from insensitivity. It is because empathy is a quality which is closely attached to emotional intelligence.

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