



A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF MEDITATION AND ITS RELATIONS TO EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

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Abstract

The famous saying of meditation “He who knows others is wise; he who knows himself is enlightened”-Laozi. Meditation creates awareness of oneself and of others, which remains as a platform for attaining emotional intelligence. Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is the ability to perceive, to control and evaluate their emotions of oneself and of others. It is through the practice of meditation one can attain emotional intelligence effortlessly. In the same way meditation and Subjective Well-Being (SWB) are also closely related. The meditation practice enables one to accept and experience their life in a more positive manner. This article elaborated on the concepts, history, types, models and relationship of meditation, emotional intelligence and subjective well-being.

Key Words: Meditation, Awareness, Emotional Intelligence and Subjective Well-Being.

MEDITATION - AN INTRODUCTION

The word “meditation” originated from Latin word meditates, meaning to think, contemplate, devise and ponder. Meditation was introduced as the translation for Eastern spiritual practices. It is referred to as Dhyana in Buddhism and in Hinduism, it comes from Sanskrit root Dhyai, meaning to meditate or contemplate. The word *meditation* carries different meanings in different contexts. It has been practiced since antiquity as a component of numerous religious traditions and beliefs. Meditation refers to mind and body practice. It often involves internal effort to self-regulate the mind. It calms mind and brings awareness inward until pure awareness is achieved. “Meditation refers to a family of self-regulation practices that focus on training attention and awareness in order to bring mental processes under greater voluntary control and thereby foster mental well-being and development and/ or specific capacities such as calm, clarity and concentration”. (Walsh & Shapiro 2006).

MEDITATION AND ITS ORIGIN

Meditation has its roots from the Shamanic Hunter-Gatherer Culture

The history of meditation is extensive. But the exact historical date when meditation first began was unknown. Shamans have been using meditation successfully in ancient tribal times, which makes this practice approximately 15,000 years old. In the old time of the hunter-gatherer cultures, shamans have been using it while sitting around the fire to enter a state of trance by using drumming, chanting and dancing to have body experiences or journey to the other world. By making these journeys they were bringing back to their tribes the ability to heal their various ailments, gained wisdom and blessings from the spirit. While this is not the meditation type that we are used to, it is considered the starting point of the history of meditation.

Epics

The earliest documents recorded that meditation stems from Vedas in ancient times around 400 BC. The Bhagavad Gita an epic poem and scripture discusses the philosophy of yoga, meditation and spiritual life.

Buddha’s remarkable mark towards meditation

Buddha, “one of history’s major proponents of meditation”, and a major meditation icon first made his remarkable mark around 500 B.C. He brought meditation as a spiritual practice and spread across Asian continent. Buddhist and Hindu-based Eastern –style meditation practice gained popularity.

Mediation from East to West

Meditation was slowly spread to West in the mid of 20th century.

MEDITATION BENEFITS AND TECHNIQUES

Meditation is considered as a complementary medicine for body and mind. It helps the mind go into a deep state of relaxation and helps to get rid of the unnecessary thoughts which are the main factors of stress. This process will result to enhanced emotional and physical well-being. The key benefits of meditation include:

- Increased self-awareness
- Helps to manage stress

- Brings positive energy
- Develops contentment in life and sense of life satisfaction

There are many different types of meditation techniques that are followed by people in their day-to-day life. But all come under the following two types:

1. Focused attention meditation

Focusing the attention on a single object during the whole meditation session. This object may be the breathe, a mantra, visualization, part of the body, external object, etc. As the practitioner advances, his ability to keep the flow of attention in the chosen object gets stronger, and distractions become less common and short-lived. Both the depth and steadiness of his attention are developed. It includes Samatha (Buddhist meditation), some forms of Zazen, Loving Kindness Meditation, Chakra Meditation, Kundalini Meditation, Sound Meditation, Mantra Meditation, Pranayama, some forms of Qigong, and many others.

2. Open monitoring meditation

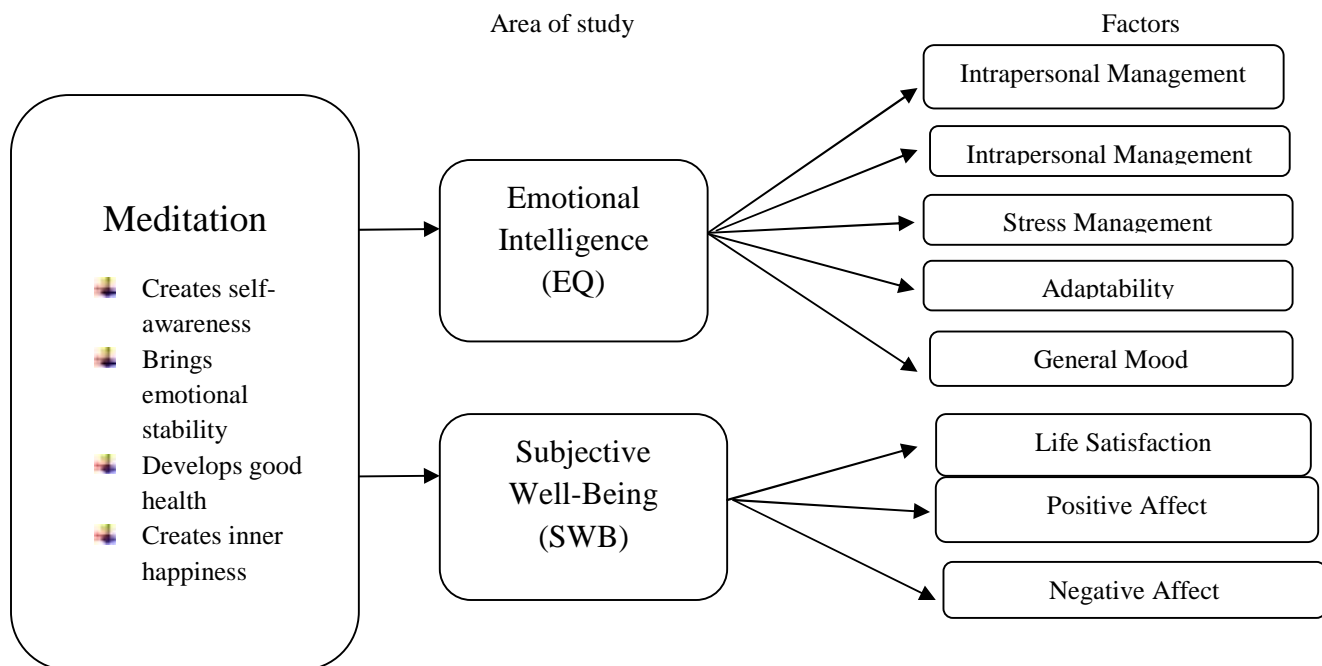
Instead of focusing the attention on any one object, we keep it open, monitoring all aspects of our experience, without judgment or attachment. All perceptions, be them internal (thoughts, feelings, memory, etc.) or external (sound, smell, etc.), are recognized and seen as they are. It is the process of non-reactive monitoring of the content of experience from moment to moment, without going into them. It includes Mindfulness meditation, Vipassana, as well as some types of Taoist Meditation

MEDITATION AND SELF –AWARENESS

Meditation creates self-awareness."Self-awareness is a psychological state in which people are aware of their traits, feelings and behaviour. Alternately, it can be defined as the realization of oneself as an individual entity"(Crisp & Turner, 2010). It is all about having a clear perception of one’s personality, including strengths, weaknesses, thoughts, beliefs, motivation and emotions. Development of self-awareness enables one to make changes in thoughts and interpretations in his/her mind. Changing the interpretation changes the emotions. Self-awareness is one of the attributes of emotional intelligence and an important factor in achieving success.

Likewise Emotional self-awareness is gaining popularity in present scenario. Understanding your own feelings, what causes them, and how they impact your thoughts and actions is emotional self-awareness. A person with high emotional self-awareness understands the internal process associated with emotional experiences and, therefore, has greater control over them. A person with high emotional self-awareness is termed as emotional intelligent persons. Accordingly meditation is predominant for creating self-awareness and to become emotionally intelligent.

Relationship of Meditation, Emotional Intelligence and Subjective Well-Being



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a person's ability to perceive and to control and evaluate their emotions. Peter Salovey and John Mayer (1990), leading researchers on EI, defined it as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others feelings and emotion, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one". Daniel Goleman (1998) defines "Emotional Intelligence is the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions effectively in ourselves and in others. An emotional competence is a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that contributes to effective performance at work".

The Competency Framework

Self Awareness	Social Awareness
Self-Management	Relationship Management

A BRIEF HISTORY OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The term emotional intelligence was first coined by a graduate student of U.S.A. in the doctoral dissertation in 1985; this seems to be the first academic use of the term 'Emotional Intelligence'. But the concept of emotional intelligence was formally proposed by Yale psychologists, Salovey and Mayer in 1990 in the journal of imagination and personality. They were scientifically measuring the difference between people ability in the area of emotion. In 1995 New York writer and consultant named Daniel Goleman written a book under the title "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ". In 1998, he again published a book called "Working with Emotional Intelligence". In this book he widened the definition of emotional intelligence.

MODELS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

There are three main models of EI:

1. Ability Model

Salovey and Mayer's conception of EI strives to define EI as "the ability to perceive emotion, integrate emotion to facilitate thought, understand emotions and to regulate emotions to promote personal growth". The ability model views emotions as useful sources of information that helps one to make sense of social environment. The model claims that EI includes four types of abilities: perceiving emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions and managing emotions.

2. Mixed Model

The model was introduced by American psychologist Daniel Goleman (1998), focuses on EI as a wide array of competencies and skills that drive leadership performance. Goleman's model outlines five main EI constructs: self-awareness, self-regulation, social skill, empathy and motivation.

3. Trait Model

British psychologist K.V.Petrides, defines Trait EI is "a constellation of emotional self - perception located at the lower levels of personality". In simple sense it is an individual's self-perceptions of their emotional abilities. It emphasis on four factors:

Well - Being, Self-Control, Emotionality and Sociability.

MEDITATION AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Meditation helps to enhance ones emotional intelligence, especially ones self -awareness which is the foundation of EI. It helps not only to relax and cope with stress, but also trains oneself to relinquish bad mental habits. It is not an end in itself, but rather a tool to investigate one's mind and change one worlds view. Meditation helps one to become aware of and detached from negative thoughts, better read the emotions of other people, melts away layered anxiety, depression and dysfunctional thoughts patterns. Once meditation renews our thought processes, one becomes more self disciplined, ensures broader perspectives in all aspects, an immunity to stress, higher reasoning skills and well-tuned problem-solving capabilities which are integral to high Emotional intelligence or EQ. Hence meditation is the great way to reduce tensions and anxiety and to improve emotional intelligence.



SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

It refers to how people experience their quality of their lives and includes both emotional reactions and cognitive judgments. Subjective well-being, a subject of study in positive psychology, deals with understanding, explaining and predicting subjective well-being and facilitating happiness. Ed. Diener, an American Psychologist, defines subjective well-being is a multidimensional and includes positive and negative emotions as well as global life satisfaction with different aspects of one's life.

Subjective well-being (SWB) is defined as 'a person's cognitive and affective evaluation of his or her life' (Diener, Lucas, & Oshi, 2002). The cognitive element refers to what one thinks about his or her life satisfaction in global terms (life as a whole) and in domain terms (in specific areas of life such as work, relationship, etc.). The affective element refers to emotions, moods and feelings. Affect is considered positive when the emotions, moods and feelings experienced are pleasant (e.g. joy, affection, etc.). Affect is deemed negative when the emotions and feelings experienced are unpleasant (e.g. guilt, anger, shame, etc.)

A person who has high level of satisfaction with their life, and who experiences a greater positive affect and little or less negative affect, would be deemed to have a high level of SWB. The concept of SWB falls within the 'hedonic' perspective that defines well-being or happiness as being fundamentally about maximizing pleasure and avoiding or minimizing pain. It differs from 'eudaimonic' perspective where it relates to people's functioning, social relationships and perceptions of whether the things they do in life are meaningful or worthwhile.

EMERGENCE OF SWB

The utilitarian's were the intellectual forerunners of subjective well-being. Utilitarian's such as Jeremy Bentham argued the presence of pleasure and the absence of pain are the defining characteristics of a good life (1948). Early in the 20th century, empirical studies of subjective well-being began to take a form. After World War II, survey researchers began polling people about their happiness and life satisfaction using simple global survey questionnaire. George Gallup, Gerald Gurin and colleagues and Hadley Cantril pioneered the use of large-scale surveys as an assessment technique. Diener (1984) provided a review of the larger database on subjective well-being and in the year 2000 he proposed a national (West) index in which subjective well-being would be traced over time. The scientific discipline of subjective well-being grew rapidly since then.

COMPONENTS OF SWB

There are 2 components of SWB. One is Affect Balance and the other is Life Satisfaction. Affect balance refers to the emotions, moods and feelings a person has. These can be all positive, all negative or a combination of both positive and negative. Life satisfaction includes global judgments of one's life (satisfaction with life as a whole) and satisfactions with specific life domains (work, marriage satisfaction) are considered cognitive components of SWB.

SWB MEASURING TOOLS

Life satisfaction and Affect balance are measured separately and independently. Ed. Diener and his co-authors developed scales such as Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE) and Flourishing Scale (FS) to measure SWB. SWLS was developed to assess satisfaction with the respondent's life as a whole. It is measured using a self-report method. A common measurement for life satisfaction is questionnaire. The SPANE is a 12-item questionnaire six item to assess positive feelings and six items to assess negative feelings. The FS consists of eight items describing important aspects of human functioning ranging from positive relationships, to feelings of competence, to having meaning and purpose in life.

MEDITATION AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

Meditation creates state of moment-to-moment awareness without judgment. It is a self-regulation practice that focuses on training attention and awareness in order to bring mental processes under greater voluntary control and it foster mental well-being and development such as calmness, clarity and concentration. Through meditation one start realizing the life, develop contentment in them, ensures satisfaction in life and develops happiness with and around them. Whereas subjective well-being includes both cognitive and emotional aspects. Cognitions about well-being cover overall satisfaction with life and in domain terms. A person who has a high level of satisfaction with their life, and who experiences a greater positive affect and little of less negative affect, would be deemed to have a high level of SWB or very happy. From this we can understand that the practice of meditation ensures subjective well-being and the same is witnessed through conceptual framework.

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BUDDHA IN THE PART OF ENLIGHTMENTS