

La inteligencia emocional¹

Una breve Sinopsis

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Introducción

Emoción e información emocional

Nuestra teoría comienza con la naturaleza de las emociones y la información que transmiten. Una visión filosófica- y más tarde evolucionista- es que las emociones controlan, y a menudo indican, respuestas motivadas a determinadas situaciones (Darwin, 1872/1998). Se cree que surgen emociones específicas en respuesta a evaluaciones específicas de diferentes categorías de relaciones (Davitz, 1969). En particular, tales relaciones implican aquellas que son importantes para la supervivencia y la reproducción, incluyendo “*amenazas, ataques..., cortejos, aislamiento..., saludos, apaciguamiento y juego*”, (Plutchik, 1994, p. 20).

Cada emoción transmite un conjunto único de señales identificadoras, información emocional (Buck, 1984). Esta información emocional puede ser transmitida a través de sus propios canales únicos de comunicación, así como a través de un único patrón de señales asociadas de los canales propioceptivo, afectivo y cognitivo (Damasio, 1994). Estas señales emocionales transmiten información sobre las evaluaciones del individuo y las reacciones motivadas por relaciones y sus vicisitudes.

Concebimos la “*inteligencia emocional*” operando sobre tal información emocional.

Inteligencia

A menudo se distinguen diferentes tipos de inteligencia de acuerdo con los tipos de información sobre las cuales operan (Carroll, 1993). Por ejemplo, la inteligencia verbal-proposicional está relacionada con la comprensión de vocabulario, oraciones y pasajes textuales extensos. Existe también una inteligencia perceptual-organizativa que implica la capacidad para detectar patrones, reconocer partes que faltan en las ilustraciones, y unir piezas, así como una inteligencia espacial (Shea, Lubinski y Benbow, 2001).

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Nuestra forma de entender la IE se vio influida tanto por la aceptación de la presencia de un factor de inteligencia general, o *g*, como por la invitación a ampliar el estudio de la inteligencia atendiendo a múltiples inteligencias específicas (Gardner, 1993). Estamos particularmente interesados en las inteligencias más discutidas que operan sobre la información social, práctica, personal y, por supuesto, emocional.

Inteligencia emocional

Nuestra concepción de la IE la define del siguiente modo:

...la capacidad para razonar sobre las emociones y hacer uso de ellas para mejorar el pensamiento. Esto incluye las habilidades para percibir emociones con precisión, para acceder y generar emociones como ayuda al pensamiento, para comprender las emociones y el conocimiento emocional, y para regular reflexivamente las emociones de modo que promuevan un desarrollo emocional e intelectual (e.g. Mayer y Salovey, 1997).

Desde esta perspectiva teórica, la IE se refiere específicamente a la combinación cooperativa de inteligencia y emoción (e.g., Ciarrochi, Chan y Caputi, 2000). Hay que advertir que el concepto de IE ha sido popularizado por otros (e.g., Goleman, *et al.*, 1995, y otros), y nuestra definición va más allá de la popularización. Nosotros también hacemos afirmaciones no inusuales sobre la potencia de la IE en nuestro modelo. De hecho, mis colegas y yo hemos intentado desenmascarar afirmaciones populares mostrando su falta de fundamento (e.g., Davies *et al.*, 1998).

Medida de la IE

Hemos construido una serie de escalas para medir la IE (Mayer, Caruso y Salovey, 1999). La escala más reciente es el Test de Inteligencia emocional (Emotional Intelligence Test) Mayer-Salovey-Caruso (2002). El MSCEIT consta de 8 tareas: dos para medir cada una de las cuatro áreas (dominios de habilidad) de IE:

El área 1, *Percibir emociones*, se mide por medio de (a) *Rostros*, para lo cual se pide a los participantes que identifiquen emociones a partir de rostros, y (b) *Imágenes*, para lo cual se pide identificar las emociones transmitidas por paisajes y dibujos.

El área 2, *Usar las emociones para facilitar el pensamiento*, se mide por (c) *sensaciones*, en la que se pide a los participantes que comparen emociones con estímulos táctiles y sensoriales (e.g., Davitz, 1969), y (d) *Facilitación*, para lo cual se pide a los participantes que identifiquen las emociones que facilitarían mejor un tipo de pensamiento (e.g., planificar una fiesta de cumpleaños, Erez y Isen, 2002).

El área 3, *Comprender emociones*, se mide por medio de (e) *Cambios*, que evalúa la habilidad de una persona para saber en qué circunstancias la intensidad emocional se reduce y se incrementa, y cómo un estado emocional lleva a otro, y (f) *Mezclas*, en la cual se pide a lo

participantes que identifiquen las emociones que están implicadas en estados afectivos más complejos (e.g., Plutchik, 1984).

El área 4, *Controlar emociones*, se mide por medio de (g) *Control emocional*, que implica presentar a los participantes escenarios hipotéticos y preguntarles cómo mantendrían o cambiarán sus sentimientos (Gross, 1998), y (h) *Relaciones emocionales*, que implica preguntar a los participantes cómo manejan los sentimientos de otros para lograr un resultado deseado (e.g., Chapin, 1942).

Hallazgos

El test MSCEIT y su test precursor, el MEIS, han sido estudiados en diferentes laboratorios y hay suficiente información sobre IE a partir de los tests para poner inicialmente de relieve el concepto de IE. Aunque queda mucho por comprender, se pueden establecer con fundamento algunos enunciados. Debido a las limitaciones de espacio y tiempo, esta sinopsis representa sólo parte de los hallazgos empíricos actualmente disponibles.

La IE puede se puede dividir desde el punto de vista estructural en las cuatro áreas sugeridas por nuestra teoría (Day y Caroll, en prensa).

- La medida de la IE es fiable en el nivel de las áreas y en el del test total- los niveles en que el test fue diseñado para ser utilizado (e.g., $r = .91$, para la fiabilidad del test total; Brackett y Mayer, 2003).
- La mayor parte de los expertos y profanos están de acuerdo sobre las respuestas correctas en el test. La correspondencia general en la identificación de una respuesta correcta entre grupos va de $r = .86$ a $.90$.
- La IE es en gran medida independiente de:
 - o Otras inteligencias (Barchard, 2001).
 - o Otras escalas de personalidad (Caruso *et al.*, 2002).
 - o Medidas con auto y hetero-informes de la IE (Brackett y Mayer, en prensa).
- La IE correlaciona con el rendimiento académico, pero no incrementalmente sobre las puntuaciones SAT, excepto posiblemente en áreas en las que el conocimiento emocional es crítico.
- Una IE superior predice relaciones sociales más positivas (Coté, Lopes, Salovey y Beers, en preparación).
- Una IE inferior predice interacciones sociales problemáticas (Brackett, Mayer y Warner, en prensa).

Conclusiones

La IE, evaluada como una habilidad, parece comportarse como una inteligencia. La fiabilidad de la escala completa del MSCEIT es $r = .91$. Correlaciona en torno a $r = .30$ con la inteligencia verbal y relacionadas, sobre $r = .20$ con autoinformes de IE; y en torno a $r = .30$ con escalas de personalidad medidas con anterioridad. Esto es, mide algo claramente único.

La IE correlaciona con un comportamiento social más positivo, y puntuaciones inferiores de IE están relacionadas con problemas de comportamiento.

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Apéndice

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