

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT THROUGH PHYSIOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN EMOTION

***DR. RASHMI KUMARI**

**Assistant Professor in Management, Women's Institute of Technology, L.N.Mithila University, Darbhanga*

ABSTRACT

Now-a-days, biochemists are on the verge of understanding how emotions, mediated by hormones, impact the psychological functions of our body. Emotional intelligence influences success in all areas of life, performance or productivity. It determines who excel in any given job and what is the basis of outstanding leadership. The present paper tries to provide a primer for understanding human emotions which may be helpful in effective human resource management.

Key words: Emotion, Emotional Intelligence, Immune System, Physiology of Emotions, Professional Effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Emotion is a positive or negative mental state that combines physiological input with cognitive appraisal. Although not traditionally considered an aspect of cognitive science, it has recently been attributed to be effective on rational decision-making. Predominant theories about emotion explain it as either making judgments, or having bodily reactions, or the combination of the two. Judgments are made, (such as satisfaction from the outcome of hard work,) and/or bodily reactions (such as sweating from fear of a task, or nervousness) take place based on a person's interactions or disposition. Emotion should not be mistaken as mood, which can be described as prolonged, but not necessarily directed emotion. Rather, emotion is usually, characterized as affective, short-lived, relatively intense, and thought process interrupting. It can also be said that emotions are tied to how their stimuli are represented. A concept presented with a positive association can cause different emotion than if presented with a negative association.

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF EMOTIONS

Levels of intensity of pleasure and arousal are ways to differentiate emotion. Human bodily reactions correlate with being pleasant or unpleasant, such as being sad, contented, happy, or upset. Stronger feelings, such as anger, are dependent on the realization and grasping of extremities of situations. Thagard explains emotion's association to cognition: representations involving a pattern of activation across neurons that are connected to brain areas that control cognitive judgments and bodily states. These areas are the prefrontal cortex and the amygdala.

Today, biochemists are on the verge of understanding how emotions, mediated by hormones, impact the physiological function of our body. If hormones, indeed, play a central role in our psychological well-being, then my dietary recommendations should, in theory, lead us to a healthier emotional state as well as to a healthier physiological one.

Your brain stores and generates emotions in its limbic system, which is the most primitive portion of the brain. The limbic system also contains two other structures called the hypothalamus and the hippocampus. The hippocampus stores dry, unemotional facts for recall, such as where you live and your spouse's work number. The hypothalamus acts as the commander-in-chief of your hormonal communication system, deciding which gland should release what amounts of hormones at what particular time.

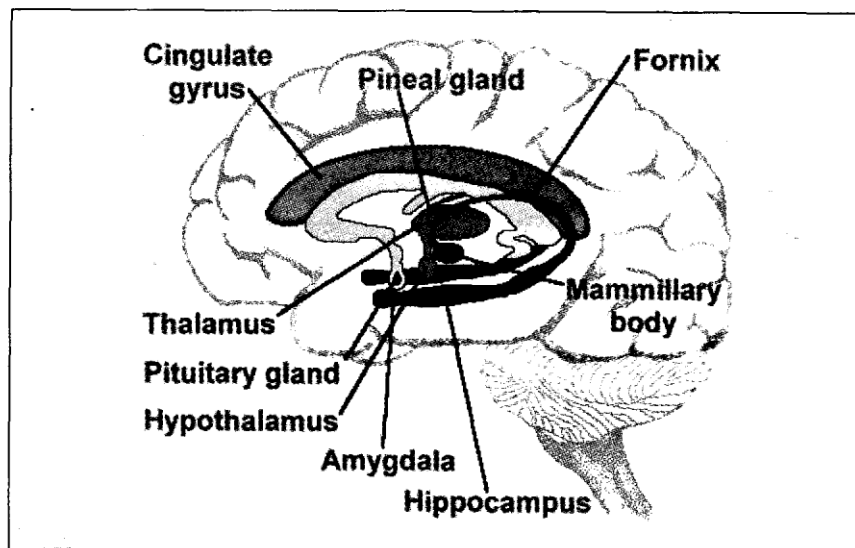


Figure – The Limbic System

The central processing facility for your emotional memories is called the amygdala. Physiological reactions result from the hormone flow that was initiated by your hypothalamus as a result of emotional distress perceived by

your limbic system. This is an extremely simplified explanation of what's really happening in your brain. So, you can imagine how much more complex your emotional system really is.

Specifically, the "emotion centre" of the brain, the limbic system, is comprised of sub-cortical structures such as the amygdala, septal area, and hippocampus, and cortical structures such as the hippocampus and the cingulate gyrus. The limbic system is further connected to the orbital-frontal area of the cerebral cortex, Wernicke's area, the inferior parietal region, and the lateral prefrontal cortex. These cortical areas process language comprehension and planning (Armstrong, 1999). These cortical areas impart their symbolic semiotic and cognitive functions to the limbic system. The limbic system is thus not specially devoted to feelings per se; it actually appraises the meaning or value of stimuli (including social information and autobiographical consciousness), coordinates perceptions with memory and behaviour, activates arousal, learns and remembers information, and coordinates bodily responses and higher cognitive processing. The limbic system thus does not produce feelings as specialized functions. Feelings that are mediated by the limbic system are integrated within its function of processing information.

THE IMMUNE SYSTEM AFFECTS EMOTIONS

To control your emotions and your immune system, you have to name some means to break this inflammatory cycle. A blood test called the AA/EPA ratio measures the amount of Omega 3 compared to Omega 6 in one's blood as the benchmark for judging silent inflammation in the body. AA, or arachidonic acid, is an Omega 6 fat that causes a pro-inflammatory hormonal response, while EPA, or eicosapentaenoic acid, is an Omega 3 fat that causes an anti-inflammatory hormonal response. By balancing this AA/EPA level in the blood, one will be able to control silent inflammation. The ideal marker for wellness is an AA/EPA ratio of 1.5.

We know that depression is highly associated with increased levels of "bad" eicosanoids in the brain and an increased AA/EPA ratio (a measurement of silent inflammation) in the blood of depressed people. Both of these observations strongly suggest the underlying role of pro-inflammatory eicosanoids in depression. Furthermore, the increase in the AA/EPA ratio of depressed patients may help explain why depression seems to accelerate the development of both cancer and heart disease, two diseases that have strong inflammatory components.

The ancient Roman physician Galen recognized this fact when he commented that depressed women were more prone to breast cancer than their more cheerful counterparts. This also explains why depressed individuals have depressed immune systems with abnormally low levels of natural killer cells, lymphocytes, and T-helper cells.

This same immune system depression has been observed in individuals who report being chronically stressed or those who have been given a single injection of corticosteroids.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: THE SUCCESS DETERMINANT

The emotional awareness and emotional management skills that provide the ability to balance emotion and reason, so as to maximize our long-term happiness. We have all heard of IQ (Intelligence Quotient), which measures our intellectual ability and often predicts school performance. However, the idea of Emotional Intelligence or Emotional Quotient (EQ) is not as well-known or understood even though it may determine as much as 80% of a person's life success. IQ determines about 20%. The idea is that EI influences success in all areas of life, performance or productivity. It determines who excel in any given job and what is the basis of outstanding leadership.

EI looks at how one handles himself and his relations. Negative emotions or distress erodes the mental abilities and decreases EI. The percentage of time individuals feel negative emotions at work is one of the strongest predictors of dissatisfaction and how likely they are to quit, in addition to this dissonance or lack of harmony in an environment lowers productivity and achievement.

Past Studies Reveals that:

- People with high EQ are happier, healthier, and more successful in their relationships.
- High EQ people exhibit all of the following: A balance between emotion and reason, an awareness of their own feelings, empathy and compassion for others.
- Signs of high self-esteem.
- We are not all created emotionally equal; we have widely different natural temperaments.
- The way we act out, express, and utilize our emotions, however, can be changed significantly.
- Unlike IQ, EQ can be significantly raised.
- The healthy emotional development of children is vital to both their ability to learn when young, and to their success and happiness as adults.

SIGNS OF LOW EQ

Since negative emotions, lack of emotions, and indirect expression of emotions are all contagious, it is generally smart to avoid negative, low-EQ people who may infect you with their bitterness bugs and victim viruses. A person with low EQ:

1. Don't take responsibilities for their feelings.
2. Attack you, blame you, command, criticize, and advise you.
3. Interrupt and invalidate you.
4. Lecture you.
5. Judge you.
6. Lay guilt trips on you.
7. Perceive themselves as helpless victims.
8. Attack you for criticizing them.
9. Think the world is not fair.

SIGNS OF HIGH EQ:

Besides not displaying the characteristics mentioned above, a person with high EQ:

1. Expresses his feelings clearly and directly.
2. Is not afraid to express his feelings.
3. Is not dominated by negative emotions such as: Fear, Worry, Guilt, Shame, Embarrassment, Obligation, Disappointment, Hopelessness, Powerlessness, Dependency, Victimization.
4. Balances feelings with reason, logic, and reality.
5. Is intrinsically motivated.
6. Is not motivated by power, wealth, status, fame, or approval.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND PROFESSIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Improving your Emotional Intelligence helps you be more effective in your career and have a more fulfilling personal life because it:

1. Motivates you to do your best
2. Strengthens trust to build productive relationships

3. Builds resilience to perform under pressure
4. Increase confidence and courage to make good decisions
5. Builds strength to persevere through adversity Clarifies your vision to create the future.
6. Clarifies your vision to create the future.

CONCLUSION

In the final analysis, our emotions and our immune system are intertwined in a complex system. As we begin to understand how emotions stem from hormonal communication, we will have a starting point to develop dietary strategies to improve emotional control. Our emotions are greatly related to our work performance. We need improve upon our emotional quotient for professional effectiveness.

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