Emotional intelligence in teaching: Comparison between teacher-practitioners in the United Kingdom and India

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Evidence demonstrates that an increase of emotional intelligence levels leads to work productivity and effectiveness. Within this study, emotional intelligence levels were examined between practitioners from the UK and India. Teacher-practitioners completed a self-report measure of emotional intelligence following email contact. Results demonstrate that cross-cultural emotional intelligence scores were moderately high for teacher practitioners in the UK and India. Furthermore, overall scores demonstrated that female practitioners scored higher in emotional intelligence than male practitioners. In relation to gender differences it was also evidenced that male and female Indian practitioners scored higher in emotional intelligence than those from the United Kingdom. In addition, emotional intelligence data for age identified that maturity and experience led to higher scores. The subdomain of self-awareness was integral to the relationship between increased emotional intelligence and other associated subdomains. One limitation of the research resonates to the use of a predominant quantitative design. Future research should focus on adoption qualitative methodology that would enable greater depth and regression analysis.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, gender, teaching, teacher-practitioners, self-awareness

BACKGROUND

The education system provides younger generation with opportunities to achieve qualifications through an established and structured framework. To facilitate this framework, teacher-practitioners are employed to deliver and support learners with curriculum and assessments. In addition to curriculum and assessment design one should also be considerate of personal well-being issues that impact learners. Arguably, rising insecurities of modern lifestyle can impact on emotions for learners. Within the education system, learners look for guidance and support both on academia and emotional and social issues. Therefore, it should be acceptable that practitioners play an instrumental role to engineer the required delivery in the development of learners. To this extent, teacher-practitioners are required to employ an array of strategies to support teaching and self-development of learners. Dealing with these emotional and social issues could equate to the connection that teacher-practitioners have to deal with an array of emotion-regulatory practices. For instance, teacher practitioners are tasked with assessing the emotions of learners they teach and monitor how they cope. Emotive regulatory practices are connected to the construct of emotional intelligence (EI).

The concept of EI, according to Salovey and Mayer (1990) alludes to the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotion that guide one's thinking and actions. Further, in confirming the utility of EI a number of meta-analysis have demonstrated effectiveness (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Schutte, Malouff, Thorsteinsson, Bhullar, & Rouke, 2007; Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004).

Research has identified that the emotional competence of practitioners must be suitability built through developed skills (Sutton & Wheatly, 2003). It is proposed that enhance emotional competence should enable teacher-practitioners to develop personal well-being and effectiveness of learning processes to supplement socioemotional development of their learners. Generally, it is observed that students who are nurtured by teacher's demonstrating high level of EI tend to, directly or indirectly absorb emotional skills. Based on this nurture from within the school environment learners can learn to manage their own issues, which eventually help them to perform better in further education and university. Further, Brackett and Katulak (2006) have suggested that EI training allows schoolchildren to improve their interpersonal relations with peers and teachers. These interpersonal relations can be aligned to delivering education and is surmountable to building student emotional and social well-being. In consideration of the research presented within education circles it would be pertinent to consider the applied practice relative to EI as it engineers the process of life skills.

Comparative research within EI and education is important as it can evidence some useful indicators of effectiveness. To this degree, evidence exists that highlights the impact of EI within primary and secondary school curriculum. For example, evidence suggests that the curriculum needs to be efficacious enough to reduce emotional and behavioural problems from an early age, which can interfere with the learning process (Caplan et al., 1992; Cohen, 1999) as cited in Vandervoot (2006). In legislative terms, the Every Child Matters legislation in England (DfES, 2004) places pupil emotional well-being as a central concern and studies reveal the benefits to pupils when EI is integrated into the school curriculum (e.g., Qualter, Whiteley, Hutchinson, & Pope, 2007).

To substantiate this further, Schutte, Malouff and Thorsteinsson (2013) advocated the use of EI training to support improved performance and success among learners. While the authors are cautious with their findings they believe that there is a good predictive evidence to support the efficacy of EI in education. The evidence above was a follow-up study to Schutte and Malouff (2002) that demonstrated a relationship between EI and success that were observed between a control-group and non-control group of learners. Results highlighted that learners who received EI training were more likely to continue with their course of study. Also, learners in a control group were provided with EI training and results

highlighted better retention rates. High retention levels are important as they correlate with increased success and it also provides funding for courses (King, Lemons, & Hill, 2012).

In acknowledging the role of EI in education it would be prudent to examine avenues that support teaching practices. A model that is cognizant to educational practices is the Goleman (2004) model of EI. There are five subdomains of the Goleman model that relate to self-awareness, management of emotions, motivation, empathy, and relationship management. In postulation, the teacher-practitioner who is self-aware is likely to manage their emotions, employ effective motivation strategies, is empathic with learners, and can manage relationship among peers. Therefore, it would be prudent to consider the Goleman model and explain the use of each subdomain of EI in education.

Self-awareness is a core subdomain of the Goleman model. Characteristics of self-awareness emanate to recognising own moods and emotions and the effects these have on others. A body of research has quantified the importance of increasing opportunities for self-awareness through regulatory practices (Barling, Slater, & Kevin Kelloway, 2000). An example of increasing self-awareness is formed through the strategy of reflective practice to develop own strengths and work on limitations (Osterman, 1990). Arguably, education practices require teacher-practitioners to maintain high levels of self-awareness in order to harness students they educate.

The management of emotions is the second aspect of the EI model and relates to the ability to control emotions. Hill and Taylor (2004) outlines: (i) learn about themselves; (ii) cope with stress and job demands; and, (iii) deal with emotions. Practitioners are required to manage their emotions during different situations that include: marking works, preparing assessments, and lesson planning. Therefore, if emotionally-intelligent teachers are able to perceive and regulate their own emotions – which may self-reinforce their own teaching practices – it can increase workplace engagement and reduce burnout.

A third aspect of the Goleman model and one that is integral to educational practices is motivation, which relates to the inner drive that provides stimulus for teaching from which teacher-practitioners are faced with the task of motivating their leaners and oneself. Therefore, through a systematic approach one could develop strategies to increase or maintain motivation levels. The enjoyment of specific goal setting could arguably supplement the systematic approach in order to improve motivation and performance levels (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, & Schellinger, 2011). Arguably, setting targets and goals is associated to both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Locke & Latham, 2012). Teacher-practitioners can associate the value of motivation both to their own teaching and to learner requirements.

A fourth aspect of the Goleman model of EI is the use of empathy, which is related to having the ability to understand other people and its considerable use in education would be supportive to teaching practices. Key characteristics of empathy that are trained as a result of these exercises include recognition, listening, imagining, and experiencing other emotions. There is arguably an association between increased empathy and its link to increased levels of EI. For instance, Gentry, Weber, and Sadri (2007) suggest that through building empathy, opportunities for increased productivity emerge. Strategies to build empathy levels can surmount to developing teamwork exercises that engage listening and problem solving tasks. Based on these activities, one would presume that teacher-practitioners are affording students opportunities to examine views and reasoning.

The final aspect of the Goleman model is relationship management which is the ability to develop skills and strategies in managing others. Research (Arefi, 2010) has advocated that the efficacy of EI relates to building relationship management, leadership skills, alluding to self-awareness and control of emotions. Given this contention, one could identify that these skills align closely to education and to the

role of teacher practitioners. For instance, one should assume that teacher-practitioners are required to build effective relationship among colleagues and students. Further, leadership qualities need to be evident when dealing with the management of learners and teaching. Arguably, teacher-practitioners need to manage their relationships with those they teach, as it fosters greater engagement and support to increase performance levels. In examining leadership relationships it was suggested by Gardner and Stough (2002) that effective leadership would relate to commitment, greater success, and positivity to improve working relationships. Arguably, roles within education would surmount to similar outcomes and teacher-practitioners are most likely to succeed if they aid relationship management.

In consideration of the literature, it has become important to assess the potential impact of EI on education practices in the United Kingdom and India. It was therefore decided to examine cross-cultural and comparative differences between teacher-practitioners to overall EI scores, gender, and age. The purpose of this study is to form how EI can inform teaching practices and what strategies can be employed to increase utility in the workplace.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

There are 214 participants (Age: $M = 39.43$ years, $SD = 2.92$) who volunteered their consent. Age ranges were (23–27, $n = 15$); (28–32, $n = 28$); (33–37, $n = 34$); (43–47, $n = 39$); (48–52, $n = 24$); and, (53–57, $n = 18$). Participants were main grade teachers or lecturers who were contacted in person and through email and were advised on how to complete the questionnaire.

Measure

To measure various dimensions of EI, the Practical EQ Emotional Intelligence was used in this study. The Practical EQ is a self-report measure that offers opportunities for assessing participants' EI. The Emotional Intelligence Self-Assessment Questionnaire is a five-competency model (Goleman, 2004) based on self-awareness, self-management, motivation, empathy, and relationship management, Each section has five questions with score nagging 0 (almost never) to 5 (almost always). There are a total of 25 questions of which nine are reversed scores. Examples of questions include: 'I understand the feedback that others give (self-awareness).'; 'I can stay calm even in difficult circumstances (self-management).'; 'My career is moving in the right direction (motivation).'; 'It is unpredictable how my colleagues will feel in any given situation (empathy).' and, 'I feel uncomfortable when other people get emotional (relationship management).' Utilising the Emotional Intelligence Self-Assessment Questionnaire allowed participants to assess their own EI from which researchers could interpret data and provide useful strategies to support practitioners.

Procedure

Ethical and legal considerations were taken into account and all participants completed the informed consent forms. In addition, participants were made aware of confidentiality and were informed of their rights to withdraw. Following contact, all participants were instructed to complete the questionnaire.

Data analysis

Quantitative data analysis would take place following the submission of questionnaires to form association with identified aims and objectives. The form of data analysis was carried out using quantitative date practices. Using Excel and SPSS software, charts and tables were created in order to outline the results.

RESULTS

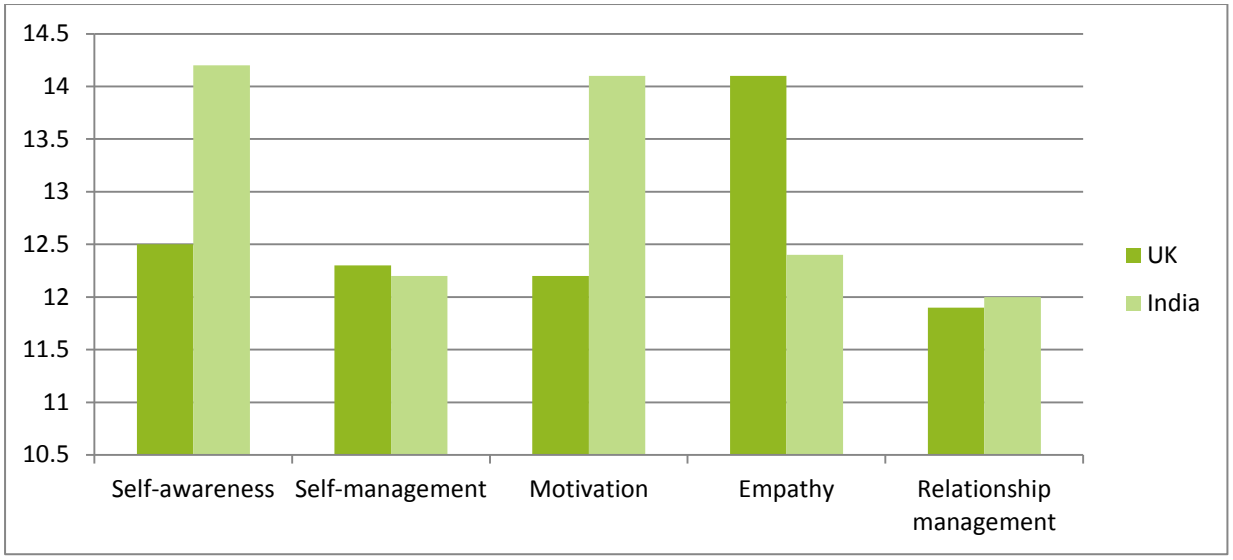

Figure 1. Overall average scores of EI dimensions obtained from teacher-practitioners from the UK and India

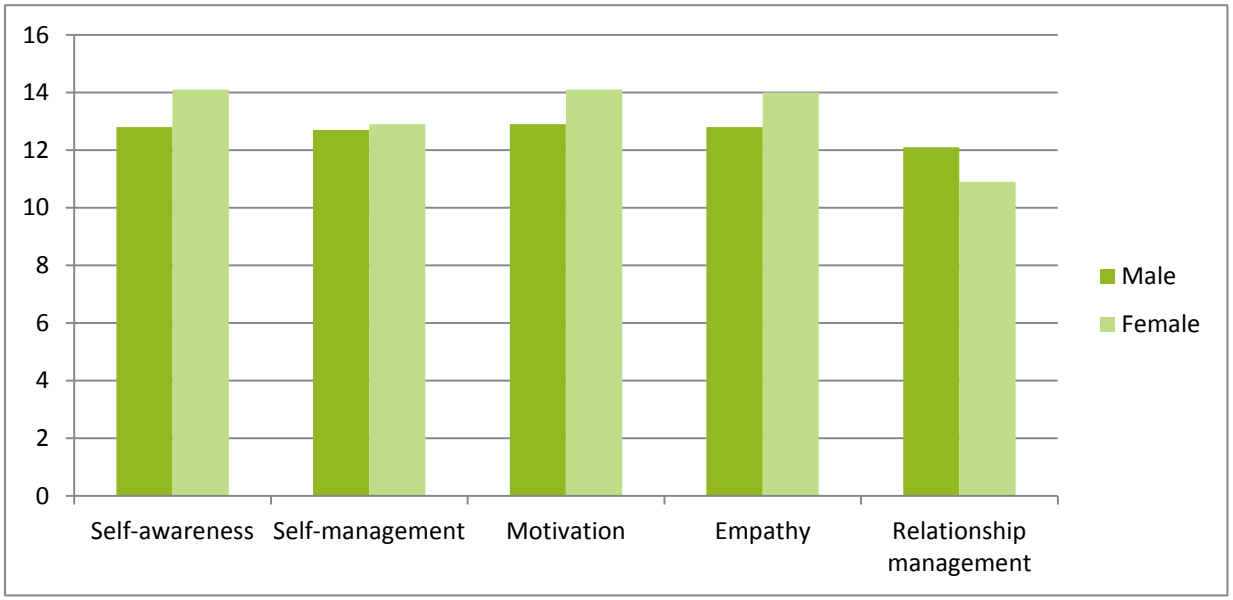

Figure 2. EI scores between gender in the UK and Indian teacher-practitioners

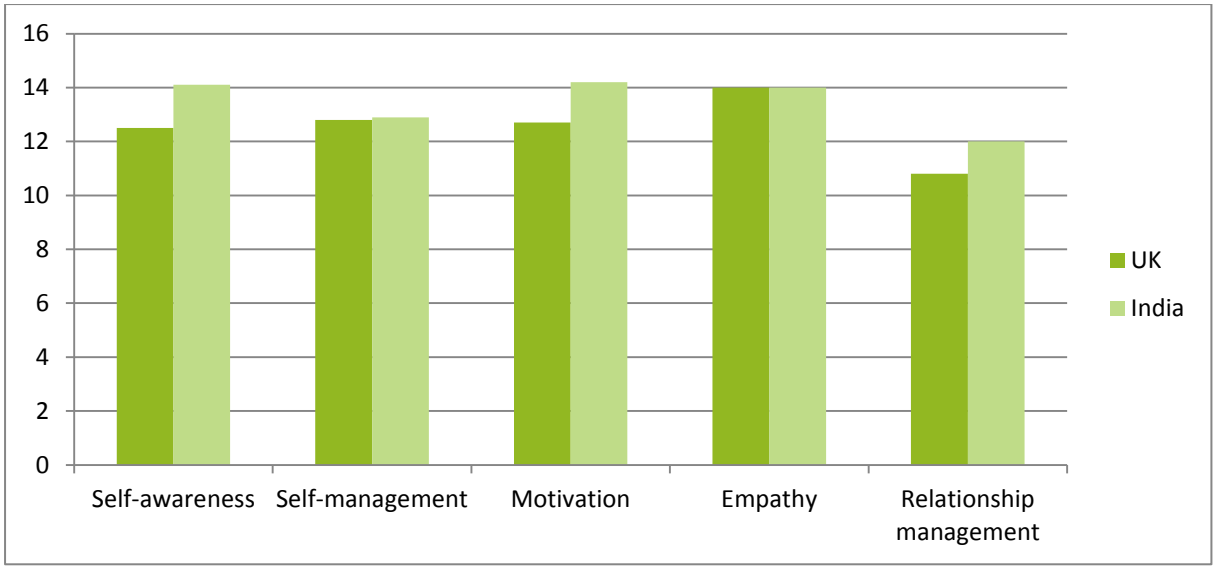

Figure 3. EI scores differences between male teacher-practitioners in the UK and India

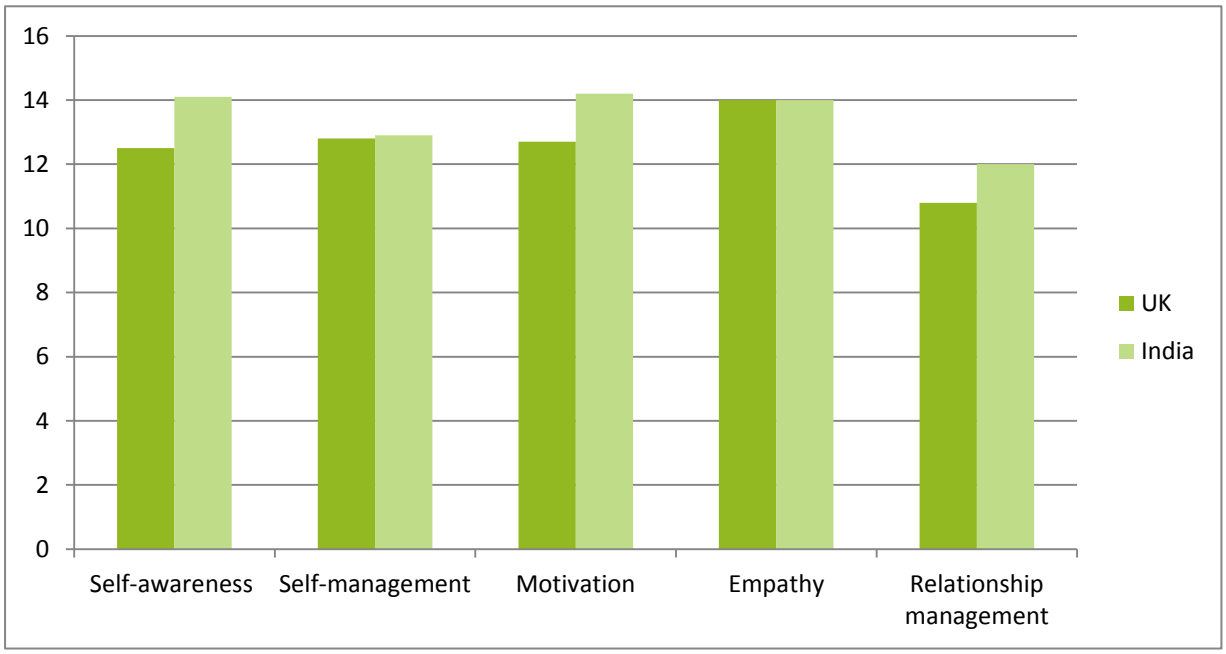

Figure 4. EI scores differences between female teacher-practitioners in the UK and India

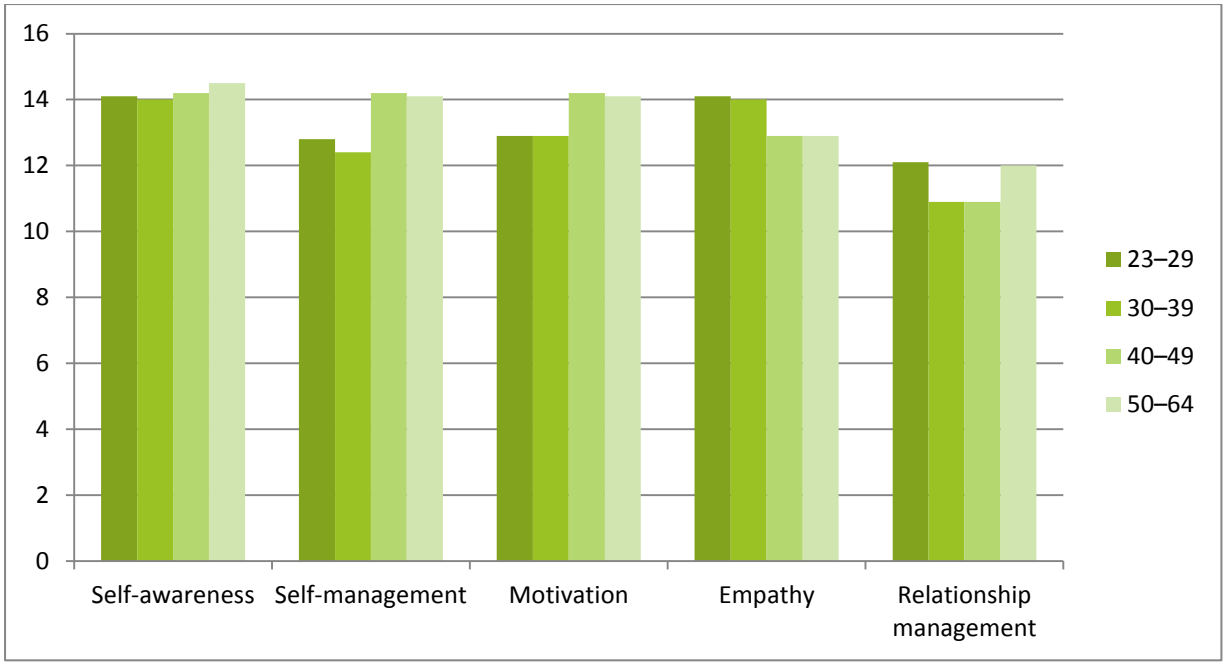

Figure 5. EI scores and age between teacher-practitioners in the UK and India

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to explore the nature of EI among teacher-practitioners in the UK and India. An exploration of EI in education is important because practitioners have to deal with challenges that associate to emotional output. Therefore, the purpose of this discussion will examine the difference of EI scores between teacher-practitioners in the UK and India. The utility of EI and its proposed practical association to education will be applied through research evidence. This work proposes potential applied practices that could enhance collaboration between colleagues and outlines limitations of this study.

EI scores reported for practitioners from the UK and India were moderately high. The subdomain overall scores for self-awareness and empathy recorded highest among practitioners. Scores for self-management and motivation align with evidence which states that the management of emotions lead to greater direction and focus (Latham & Piccolo, 2012; Schutte, Malouff, & Thorsteinsson, 2013). Conversely, scores for the subdomain of relationship management recorded lowest on the Goleman model. It could be argued that the first four subdomains of EI relate to oneself and that relationship management relates to dealing with others. However, one should be cautious with this interpretation as a number of variables may construe this argument as unsupportive and speculative. Therefore, a clearer examination of how these results relate to the intended aims and objectives require explanation.

EI scores for gender reported that females outscored males on four of the five subdomains, equating to 90% of the data. Previous research (e.g., Brackett & Mayer, 2003; Ciarrochi, Chan, & Caputi, 2000) have supported the notion that females report higher levels of EI than males. However, there is considerable debate on which specific EI dimensions females perform better (e.g., Day & Carroll, 2004; Farrelly & Austin, 2007; Livingstone & Day, 2005; McIntyre, 2010). Therefore, implementing a meta-analysis would be useful in context when assessing relationships between gender scores and EI scores. A meta-analysis performed by Joseph and Newman (2010) highlighted that females obtained higher scores than males on EI dimensions. Assessing the data from the current study identifies that both male and female teacher-practitioners from India scored higher in EI than those from the UK. Although caution should be

taken with the interpretation of gender scores, there is useful information in attempting to understand the relationship between EI differences and gender.

The EI scores by age highlighted that for three of the subdomains (self-awareness, self-management, and motivation) experienced teacher-practitioners scored highest. Interestingly, subdomains of empathy and relationship management highlighted that younger teacher-practitioners scored highest, although this was marginal. Harrod and Scheer (2005) identified a correlation between EI and age as it was suggested that older participants were more likely to be self-aware and reflective of emotions than younger participants. The study lends support to the growth in literature that suggests EI can change with life experiences and is learnable (Goleman & Cherniss, 2001; Schutte, Malouff, & Thorsteinsson, 2013).

While it was identified that increases in age lead to higher EI scores, it would be unfair to discount that younger age and less experience doesn't correlate with enhanced EI. This would not be a true reflection and discounts many younger participants who exhibit higher levels of EI than some experienced participants. In assessing the extant literature it suggestive that EI can be learned through trainability (Schutte, Malouff, & Thorsteinsson, 2013). As a result, it is worthy of consideration that both educators and students should engage with EI because it is vital to learn and manage emotive skills (Goleman & Cherniss, 2001). Incorporating EI in education is particularly important because as Barchard (2003) suggests that modern educational systems do not promote EI. Developing EI would provide students with opportunities to recognise and handle emotions – leading to effective emotional output.

The data within the present study identifies self-awareness as a core component of EI with the Goleman model. The evidence presented in the results suggests that self-awareness levels between teacher-practitioners in the UK and India are similar. One proposal forwarded related to an increase in staff development practices with teams to facilitate productivity and effectiveness. Research has indicated that self-awareness aligns to emotions and moods that are self-driven (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The data presented in this research highlights that increased self-awareness allowed practitioners to become aware of their own emotions and actions in the workplace. Mousavi, Sarboland, Sarboland, and Jahangirzade (2012) contend that through processes of thought and emotion, individuals can remodel behaviour to enhance motivation levels through specific goal setting (Locke & Latham, 2002). Therefore, given the contention that self-awareness is core to the emotional intelligence rubric it is suggested by the researchers that increases in this area could enhance other subdomains.

IMPLICATIONS

This work proposes that practitioners self-manage themselves and support others through directed use of strategies. These strategies could be evidenced through varies methods of goal setting, participation in physical activity to maintain psychological balance, regulating mood and emotion through listening to music and completing short activities. In advocating the increase and maintenance of self-awareness it could be proposed to employ learning journals that are completed as an ongoing process to support practitioners. In addition to the outlined strategies proposed, two key mechanisms to support self-awareness include reflective practice (Gill, 2014) and profiling (Gee, Marsall, & King, 2010; Newman & Crespo 2008). Through employing these strategies, teacher-practitioners can identify strengths and areas to improve teaching practices. It is argued that reflective practice and profiling will enable teacher-practitioners to identify greater opportunities to increase levels of self-awareness aligned to setting specific goals (Locke & Lotham, 2012).

Although useful information within this study exists it would be prudent to offer limitations. The study allowed the researchers to carry out simple data techniques but these were not robust enough to examine relationships in greater depth and clarity to allow causality to be discussed. Thus, although the

information gathered and resulting data interpretation was invaluable, future research should explore more complex data techniques. One suggestion to overcome these limitations would be to reassess the methodology incorporated and utilise more qualitative semi-structured methodology.

CONCLUSION

Research has advocated the effectiveness of EI in relation to work productivity and effectiveness (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004). The current study advocated the use of the Goleman model to assess EI within educational practices of teacher-practitioners. It is proposed that educational institutions and awarding bodies engage with EI practices and implement these into curriculum designs and teacher training packages. Arguably, EI is an important life skill that can support performance levels and so this opportunity should not be ignored. One of these opportunities can be designed through the exploration of holistic staff development among teacher-practitioners to share best practices. Furthermore, it is proposed that curriculum designs are adapted to consider enhancing EI among teacher-practitioners and students. This study has identified that EI is crucial and integral in educational practices to facilitate both teacher practitioners and student practices. Increasing future collaborations would be a useful implication in subject areas (i.e., sciences with sciences; business with business) or across different subject areas (i.e., business with sport; science with sport; economics with psychology). One way to support collaborative practices would be through the facilitation of multimedia (e.g., Skype, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook groups, and blogs) opportunities between the UK and Indian teacher-practitioners. Indeed, evidence exists of how online technology provides opportunities to engage with best practices (McLeod & Richardson, 2013). For instance, Twitter, albeit not primarily an academic networking service has been taken into account due to its networking features which is also becoming increasingly popular for academics and students. Discussion centres on the benefits of these services to both seasoned and early career researchers (Relojo & Pilao, 2016). This engagement would foster many opportunities that would enable practitioners to work alongside each other without the need to actually travel overseas. For example, the 'Cloud Nanny' introduced in the UK and Bhutan's national educational policy encourages EI training for teachers and students. These projects are practical applications of how EI training is gaining roots in the educational system.

An overall synopsis reveals that the following should be considered at all levels. First, EI should form part of teacher training packages and awareness of its utility should be raised. Second, there should be greater use of resources to develop best practices through collaboration. Third, a process of understanding EI more effectively would be established through a qualitative research methodology. Finally, staff development opportunities should not be missed to facilitate best practices.

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