

IQ, EQ – VQ?

Intelligence has always been a primary method for humans to measure success. Academic excellence has been imposed on us since young – as kids, we were reminded to study hard and excel in exams. When a child excels in an examination, especially a public one, the parents would almost immediately share the success of their children with pride.

Our education system is also structured to emphasise the importance of academic excellence; at least this is what happens in Malaysia. Placements to boarding schools or universities are primarily based on academic results – the better the results, the higher the likelihood of securing a place. The importance of academic excellence extends to the next phase in life – getting a job. The first thing an employer would look at when recruiting an employee would be the candidate's examination transcript. The ones who excel in their studies would most probably be shortlisted and has higher chances of being employed.

The work of measuring intelligence dated back to the late 1880s, spearheaded by Paul Broca and Sir Francis Galton. Both of them shared the opinion that we could measure intelligence by measuring the size of the human skull. Around the same time, Wilhelm Wundt, a German professor came up with an idea of using the human ability to reflect on their own thoughts as a measure of intelligence.

Although their theories were not accepted after being scientifically tested, their works had laid the foundation for the development of modern intelligence tests or what we now commonly refer to as IQ tests.

IQ stands for Intelligence Quotient, coined by the German psychologist, William Stern. It is a score derived from several standardised tests designed to assess human intelligence. The first modern IQ test was developed by Alfred Binet and Theodore Simon, known as the Binet-Simon Scale. The scale was further improvised by Lewis M. Terman, a psychologist at Stanford University, which gave birth to the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale. This scale is still widely used today.

IQ continues to play a significant role in today's world. People with high IQ are revered and referred to especially in matters that are technical in nature. However, we have discovered that intelligence alone does not guarantee success. There are still other components and skills that we need to master in order for us to be successful.

EQ – Building Emotional Intelligence

The concept of Emotional Intelligence, also known as EI or EQ was popularised in the mid-90s by the author, psychologist and science journalist, Daniel Goleman. Although he was not the founder of the concept, he was the one who managed to put things into perspective for the general public.

I remembered being forced by my mentor to read the book “Working with Emotional Intelligence” written by Daniel Goleman back in 2009. At first, I was dragging myself to read it but it turned out to be one of my most enjoyable read and all-time favourite.

Among the fascinating facts that I discovered after reading the book was the reason behind the incident where Mike Tyson, the undisputed heavyweight

world boxing champion for twenty years bit off the ears of his rival, Evander Holyfield during one of the most controversial boxing fights ever. In a documentary, Mike Tyson explained that his action was a retaliation towards the continuous head-butting by Holyfield.

In his book, Daniel Goldman explained the scientific reasons behind the retaliation – how an ‘amygdala hijack’ took place and caused the uncalled and unexpected reaction. Amygdala is the emotional part of the brain, which regulates the “fight or flight” response. When threatened, it can respond irrationally causing an ‘amygdala hijack’, which then causes a spontaneous and irrational response.

There were many other interesting facts elaborated in the book, which are just as intriguing as the example I have just given.

To me personally, the EQ concept brought to the table by Daniel Goleman was logical, practical and life-changing despite many criticisms and disagreements on his models and theories. Nevertheless, a majority of specialists in the field generally agree that emotional intelligence does exist and plays an integral role in achieving success.

The best part of it, unlike IQ, EQ can be learned and improved over time. On a personal basis, learning the concept had changed the way I approach and manage my relationship with others.

Scientific studies have shown that IQ contributes to about 4% to 25% of a person’s job performance, much lower than what everyone expects. Even if we were to accept the 25% figure, this means that three quarters of the variability in job performance is not the result of IQ and must be due to “something else”. This “something else” is what most specialists agree to be EQ.

***Dedication beats talent. Practice trumps genetics.
And a strong character is more valuable than a lucky break.***

Robin Sharma

On the other hand, studies have also shown that people with high EQ have greater mental health, exemplary job performance, and more potent leadership skills. Daniel Goleman's research had shown that 67% of the abilities deemed necessary for superior performance in leaders was attributed to EQ and mattered twice as much as technical expertise or IQ.

Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.

Aristotle, Greek philosopher and scientist

Daniel Goleman defined emotional intelligence in the appendix of his "Working with Emotional Intelligence" book as –

"The capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships."

In his earlier book, "Emotional Intelligence: Why it can Matter more than IQ", he defined it as –

"Understanding one's own feelings, empathy for the feelings of others and the regulation of emotion in a way that enhances living."

He came up with an emotional competence framework consisting of five domains:

1. Self-awareness knowing our emotions

2. Self-regulation managing our emotions
3. Motivation motivating ourselves
4. Empathy recognising and understanding other people's emotions
5. Social skills managing relationship through managing other people's emotions

In short, EQ focuses on managing relationship with others through emotions management – both our emotions and others. The better we are at it, the better we are able to manage our lives, the higher likelihood of us achieving success.

Is EQ Enough?

EQ was a revolutionary concept that changed the way we define the ingredients of success. There are various books and programmes available to help people master the concept.

But then, are intelligence and skills to handle people enough to generate success, especially in the long run?

Somebody once said that in looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence, and energy. And if you don't have the first, the other two will kill you. You think about it; it's true. If you hire somebody without [integrity], you really want them to be dumb and lazy.

Warren Buffet, business magnate, investor and philanthropist;
the most successful investor of the 20th century

It is proven that people with high IQ and EQ can produce results. The formula just makes sense – if we know what we're doing and subsequently

persuade others to help us do it, it's a home run. However, there are many instances where people with both IQ and EQ produced disastrous results.

In 2015, my protégé, Intan and I entered an essay competition organised by the Asian Institute of Finance. The topic of the essay was "Professionalism in the Financial Services Industry". I personally thought that the essay came out great, mainly because the person who actually did the writing was Intan; my role was to give points and review the essay. Our essay focused on ethics and how it played a critical role in developing professionalism in financial services.

The essay touches on the "hows" and "whys" highly publicised incidents such as the collapse of Lehman Brothers Holding Inc. happened. The impact of the collapse was huge – it resulted in a Wall Street crisis in 2008, which led to a financial crisis that affected various parts of the world. The main contributor to the collapse was ethics – it went missing once people put aside their values in running a business. They had intelligent executives leading the team, intelligent enough to manipulate the system to cover their mistakes. The leaders also obviously knew their ways with people, which is how they managed to hide their mistakes for a long time. This is a classic example where the combination of IQ and EQ failed in producing sustainable successful results. A component was, however, missing – values.

Another good example to illustrate this point is the story of Stratton Oakmont, the boiler room that marketed penny stocks and defrauded investors with the "pump and dump" type of stock sales. It was founded by Jordan Belfort after he was laid off from his job as a trainee stockbroker at L.F. Rothschild due to the Black Monday stock market crash in 1987. I came to know of his story after watching the blockbuster movie – "The Wolf of Wall Street". The movie was based on a memoir he had written about his journey and downfall.

Belfort came about the idea of setting up Stratton Oakmont and devising his scheme after he landed on a job at a boiler room in Long Island that specialises in penny stocks. Penny stocks are low-priced, small-cap stocks that usually cost less than a penny. Thanks to his aggressive pitching style and strong persuading skills, he managed to make a small fortune. This is when he decided to start up Stratton Oakmont, recruiting his friends and training them with the hard sell technique he was using. In no time, his manipulative ways produced results. At one point, Belfort was employing close to 1,000 stock brokers and was involved in stock issues totaling more than US\$1 billion.

The pump-and-dump scams he ran at Stratton Oakmont led to investor losses of approximately US\$200 million. The firm was permanently shut down in 1995 after the U.S. government took disciplinary actions against it. Belfort was indicted for securities fraud and money laundering. He was sent to 22 months of prison and was ordered to pay back \$110.4 million that he swindled from stock buyers.

Belfort was obviously someone intelligent – he graduated with a degree in Biology from American University. He quickly saw the opportunity to make easy money when he was working at the boiler room in Long Island. He had strong EQ – persuading people to take up the penny stocks was a piece of cake for him. In the movie, there was a scene that showed how he motivated his team to drive results. He knew how to manipulate and play with emotions to his personal benefit.

Given the two combination, he was already using the traditional formula of success; IQ + EQ = Success. To be fair to him, he achieved it. Nevertheless, it was only for a short period of time and fundamentally, it was wrong. There was no way that it could have been sustainable in the long run.

How did it all happen?

The answer is relatively simple; he was missing one important component of true success – values.

Values – the Basics of a Person’s Life

Values are the rules by which we make decisions about right and wrong, good and bad. Values are closely related to morals and ethics; in essence, although they are different, they represent the same intention. In short, we can summarise the differences between the three as follows:

Values – Beliefs of a person or group.

Morals – Motivation on ideas of rights or wrong, which have greater social values.

Ethics – A theory or a system of moral values.

Basically what it represents is good principles to be practised by us humans. Values are not something alien or new to us, it has been there and inculcated in us since we were young by our parents, teachers, friends and surroundings. The values we carry are molded based on guidelines provided by our religion, society or culture – most of it are passed down and taught by our family.

Values aren't buses... They're not supposed to get you anywhere.

They're supposed to define who you are.

Jennifer Cruise, bestselling and award winning author of contemporary romance novels

Values Builds Personality

Values play an important role in a person's life; it balances out everything that we do, ensuring that we do the right things and doing it right. Ultimately, values form our attitude, behaviors and actions, both internally and externally – it forms our personality.

***Your own acts tell the world who you are
and what kind of society you think it should be.***

Ai WeiWei, Chinese Contemporary artist and activist

Internally it forms our principles and beliefs on how the world should be and how we fit in. Externally, it forms the way we interact and engage with others, not just in terms of how we communicate with each other but also how we actually view other people.

***You may be the most handsome, stunning and most attractive person
around but if you have an ugly heart and personality, it will ruin everything.***

Mufti Ismail Menk, Muslim cleric and Grand Mufti of Zimbabwe

Because values are so embedded in us and expressed through our personality, it becomes a reference point for people to judge us. We are usually judged based on how we treat people, which is a simple yet fair method. Individuals with strong grounding of positive and good values would definitely treat people well where else individuals with bad values would do the opposite. In the end, we can claim that we are living up to good values but the truth lies in our actions that are reflected through our behaviour and not mere words.

Behavior never lies.

Gary Ryan Blair, author, speaker, coach and consultant

Values in Action – Interacting with People

As mentioned, values translate into our actions and it is most obvious when we interact with people. As an example, a basic value that people always fail to practise is respect. How often do we hear people talking harshly and rudely to others? Raising their voice and shouting whenever they address other people. Respect is a value sensitive to us and hits our ego easily. Because of this, disrespectful is one of the most difficult things to forgive and forget.

No matter how educated, talented, rich or cool you believe you are, how you treat people ultimately tells all.

Unknown

Another example that we can easily relate to is honesty. We would be lying if we claim that we have never lied. Some of us lie more often than others, some even to a ridiculous and illogical extent. After a while, it becomes a bad habit that forms part of a person's character.

***Good habits are hard to form and easy to live with.
Bad habits are easy to form and hard to live with.***

Brian Tracy, author

Nevertheless, everyone hates to be lied to – a trust that is broken is never easy to mend. Once people start associating us with dishonesty, our integrity becomes questionable. It could then take forever for us to change people's perception towards us.

Honesty is a very expensive gift. Don't expect it from cheap people.

Warren Buffet

The danger of lying is reminded in Islam – of how it would lead to evil deeds while the benefits of honesty or truthfulness would put us on the path of righteousness.

‘Abdullah narrated: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to Paradise. And a man keeps on telling the truth until he becomes a truthful person. Falsehood leads to Al-Fajur (i.e. wickedness, evil-doing), and Al-Fajur leads to the (Hell) Fire, and a man may keep on telling lies till he is written before Allah, a liar."

Bukhari

Again, let us look at the example cited earlier – the life of Jordan Belfort. After starting his life journey with lies and dishonesty, his life was filled with evil deeds – he was surrounded by drugs, excessive drinking and prostitutes – nowhere close to a righteous life. We can see a similar trend in the lives of criminals and crooks.

Our values should be approached holistically and applied fairly to everyone. Due to historical and social reasons, the world we live in is structured according to class and status. This results in people sometimes being pretentious in terms of the values they carry. We tend to treat people superior to us nicely but behave the opposite towards people inferior to us. It is natural for staffs to exhibit great respect for their bosses, even the top guns behave the same way towards theirs.

Just look at how a CEO acts during a Board of Directors' meeting, he might be the fiercest boss on normal days but on the meeting day, he would transform to be the most polite person on earth. We can easily notice this whenever he addresses and interact with the board members. The same behavior cascades down the power pyramid of an organisation.

The true test of the values we carry is not seen in how we treat our superiors or equals. Instead, it is seen in how we treat the people below us – this is when our true values appear.

***If you want to see the true measure of a man,
watch how he treats his inferiors, not his equals.***

J. K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter fantasy series

The best example to illustrate this is none other than our beloved Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). He has always shown kindness to everyone, especially the weak and poor. An example of this is how he treated his helper; Anas ibn Malik who was serving Prophet (ﷺ) since he was 10 years old.

Anas narrated: I served the Prophet (ﷺ) for ten years, and he never said to me, "Uf" (a minor harsh word denoting impatience) and never blamed me by saying, "Why did you do so or why didn't you do so?"

Bukhari

Ultimately, values would show how we behave in society and contribute to it. Because at the end of the day, values is what brings kindness to the society and gives hope to humanity.

Character is how you treat those who cannot do nothing for you.

Unknown

Values Guides Our Decisions and Actions

As values form our personality, it also forms our mindset. The flow is rather straightforward – our values influence our decisions and subsequently the actions we take.

***The decisions you make are a choice of values
that reflect your life in every way.***

Alice Waters, chef, restaurateur, activist, and author

Referring to the example cited earlier where integrity was compromised to maximise monetary gain, once Jordan Belfort decided that honesty was not part of his work ethics, he proceeded with his manipulative methods and built his short stint success based on this decision. We know how it ended for him in the end.

Similarly, if we decide to hold on to good values, our decisions in life would then reflect the same, forming good practices, which are subsequently translated into our actions. The key is to be clear of the values we hold on to and to hold on to it strongly. The moment we are able to do that, decision-making becomes easy. If something does not fit our values, we can quickly put it aside and move on with our next option. As an example, if respect is a value that we hold on dearly to, we would never proceed with an action that would result in us disrespecting other people's territory.

When your values are clear to you, making decisions becomes easier.

Roy E. Disney, longtime senior executive for The Walt Disney Company

As we make clear decisions based on our values, our actions reflect it clearly as well. An action based on good values fits the definition of a good deed hence we would be able to achieve both worldly and hereafter benefits.

Jabir reported that he heard Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) saying, "Every good deed is charity".

Bukhari

The Effects of Values

Values define us and as we live by it, it brings various effects on us. The effects would depend on the values we carry, whether it is positive or negative.

Negative values would harden our heart and soul, bringing us away from a righteous life. If we were to allow such values to dominate us, by the end of it, we would be lucky if we could still stand up and call ourselves human. Negative values slowly alter us to become a person who is far from the natural design of a human. As it forms our personality and character, its negative aura would then spread to the environment around us, pushing away good things and hindering it from coming near us, bringing us away from success. People would avoid us as they would not trust us – blocking feelings of love and care, leaving us alone and miserable.

And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful.

Luqman 31: 18

At times, we might think that we have achieved success but in actual fact, we have not. We might be enjoying the material achievements but deep down we never found true satisfaction in life – always living in fear of not being trusted and at the same time not being able to trust anyone, lacking a sense of belonging and many other internal fears that can overpower us. Most of the time, the material success are temporary just like what happened to Jordan Belfort.

A bad attitude can literally block love, blessings, and destiny from finding you. Don't be the reason you don't succeed.

Mandy Hale, blogger turned New York Times best-selling author

On the other hand, as obvious as it may seem, positive values put us on the path of righteousness; it gives us a positive effect, both internally and externally. Positive values behave like a magnet that pulls good and great things to us, bringing us closer to success and a fulfilling life. People would like and trust us, making it easy for us to get through life. Things would fall into place as soon as the domino effects of our positive values and actions take its course.

O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.

Al-Hujurat 49: 13

Actually, the cause and effects of values on us is relatively simple – whatever values that we live by and project would bring about a similar reaction back to us.

For instance, if we were to display high level of respect for people, people would respect us back as well – mutual respect. If were we to always be honest with people, people would be honest with us or at least at the very minimum, they would really feel bad if they were to lie to us. This would result in them eventually telling us the truth.

In other words, what we do to others or the world, the same would be returned to us; a simple cause and effect formula that we should always be mindful of – the law of attraction.

You attract what you put out. Be mindful.
Alexandra Elle, author and motivational speaker

Shared Values – Applying it to a Team

The greatness of a man is not how much wealth he acquires but in his integrity and his ability to affect those around him positively.

Bob Marley, reggae music legend

Positive values that are individually practised would bring a great impact to an individual. But how do we extend to it the people around us and produce a much bigger success for everyone?

The biggest challenge about values is that the spectrum is wide with various different definitions and interpretations. This makes it impossible for us to assume that everyone has the same values and the same understanding of those values. Even within the same society, the interpretations can be different, what more in different societies and culture.

Let us take respect as an example – although different societies agree that respect is a fundamental and important value, it is expressed in different ways. The first experience of respect is felt at the moment when two people meet and greet each other. In western countries, the normal way of greeting each other is through a handshake. It is also common in certain western countries as well as in Middle East countries for people to greet each other with hugs and kisses on the cheeks. In countries such as Japan or Korea, people would nod or bow slightly instead of offering a handshake. Many cultures view touching someone's head as a sign of disrespect while in certain cultures it is a way of showing respect. These are all different ways of us greeting each other.

At the same time, we need to be careful and sensitive of the different cultures so that we don't show disrespect when greeting people. For instance in Muslim countries, we should avoid handshakes, hugs or kisses when greeting people of different gender. This is because Islam strictly limits the physical

contact between different genders who are not tied to each other by marriage or close family ties.

With such a big difference, how can we align and streamline everyone on a team to be on the same page?

This is where the concept of shared values comes into place. It is a list of values that the team should agree to abide by in the performance of their responsibilities and duties. To avoid misinterpretations and future disagreements, the definition of each value should be explicitly spelled out so that everyone understands it the same way.

Let us use the same of example of respect. Respect has a wide definition, which increases the likelihood of people having different interpretations of it. By defining a specific definition our shared version of respect, we can align everyone to practise the same version. The definition can be as simple as valuing each other's differences.

Once everyone is on the same page and practises the same version of values consistently, it would eventually form the culture of the team. This is why it is so important to define the shared values properly and for it to be mutually agreed by everyone – the better it is defined, the better the culture of the team would be. A positive culture produces positive results and this is how great teams are born.

Values Quotient (VQ) – The Final Component of True Success

It is clear and obvious that values form a critical part of our life – the final component of success. The benefits of values are fundamental to us individually and to humanity in general.

1. Values build sustainable success.

IQ and EQ build the path to success; we identify the methods and manage our way to achieve it. But the final component that ensures the sustainability of our success is values. Values ensure that we make the right decisions and actions using our IQ and EQ so that it does not end up as a short-term success.

For instance, when we make a decision with high integrity and a sense of responsibility, we will ensure that we don't make a decision just to impress the relevant stakeholders. We would look at the overall big picture before making a decision.

An approach we can take to do this is to imagine whether our decision would cause our successor to curse or love us when we are no longer around – did our decision leave them with a mess to clean up afterwards. This would ensure we make a sound decision that would benefit the relevant parties in the long run.

2. Values gels everyone together.

EQ allows us to get through to people. It might get us together provided that the leading character is strong enough to bond everyone together. However, it does not guarantee that we would continue to be together. I have personally seen how a team of great people fall apart after their leader who practised high EQ left. This is what happens when we rely solely on EQ to gel everyone together.

The component that continuously gel people together is values. With a set of common values shared and practised by everyone, it creates a culture that bonds everyone together regardless whether there are dropouts from the team – culture should stay no matter who leaves.

3. Values based success extends to the greater mankind.

Success that is attained based on values would usually extend to society. This is because decisions and actions that are made based on good values would go beyond personal intentions, focusing more on the benefits to the majority. When practising good values, we would take into consideration any impact our actions may have to our surroundings, be it short term or long term.

This is why financial or economic decisions that are made based on values would benefit the system in general – improving the economy, increasing income, creating new job opportunities. Decisions that compromise on values would result in the opposite effect as what happened to the global economy during the sub-prime crisis.

4. Values create a positive environment.

Good values put together create a healthy and harmonious environment. People would be more aware, sensitive and compassionate towards each other. With such positive aura running around, it encourages and drives a high performance culture where everyone strives to give their best and contribute to the success of the majority. This is why an organisation that has a good values based culture has a low turnover rate.

We can also look at countries that practise a strong values based culture such as Japan. Because of such high awareness and good values, Japan has a much lower street crime rate compared to other countries, which makes it a very safe country to visit. If only everyone is able to practise the same good values, the world would not be facing so many issues – war, corruption, violence.

5. Values bring us closer to hereafter success.

Ultimately, the true meaning of success for Muslims lies not in this world we are living in but in the hereafter – our final destination. The way for us to achieve this is to continuously practise good values and avoid bad ones throughout our life. Good values translate to the rights actions which would then translates to hereafter success.

Abu ad-Darda' reported: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Nothing will be heavier on the Day of Resurrection in the Scale of the believer than good manners. Allah hates one who utters foul or coarse language."

At-Tirmidhi

Perfecting the Formula

We have always been programmed that IQ and EQ plays an important role in creating success. There is no doubt that these two components are important but we have to always remember that there is the third and most important component, VQ.

Great people have great values and great ethics.

Jeffrey Gitomer, author, professional speaker and business trainer

In summary, IQ would tell us how to do it while EQ tells us who does it and helps us manage the process. VQ, on the other hand, is much more fundamental; it tells us why we are doing it and ensures that we do it right.

'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin Al-'as reported: Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not indulge in abusive, shameless talk nor did he pretend to indulge in it. He used to say, "The best of you is the best among you in conduct."

Bukhari and Muslim

At the end of the day, true success does not lie in how intelligent we are or how well we maneuver our way with people. What people remember most about a person is their personality: how nice, helpful, respectful and caring the person is, which represents the values that the person carries – the power of VQ.

Be more concerned with your character than your reputation.

***Because your character is what you really are,
while your reputation is merely what others think you are.***

John Wooden, American basketball player and coach