

DIMENSIONS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG YOUNG ADULTS: A CASE STUDY¹

Paulina Tsvetkova Mayiana Mitevka

PU "Paisii Hilendarski" Plovdiv Str. "Tsar Asen" 24

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56293/IJMSSSR.2024.5321>

IJMSSSR 2024

VOLUME 6

ISSUE 6 NOVEMBER – DECEMBER

ISSN: 2582 - 0265

Abstract: The present study involves an analysis of emotional intelligence among young adults. The age group of the participants is between 20 and 38 years and their number is 67. All the individuals are students in undergraduate programs. The methodology used was a questionnaire for measuring emotional intelligence as a personality trait, a short version adapted into Bulgarian by Dr. Antonina Kardasheva. The author of the test itself is Petrides, whose model reflects the subjective processes of emotional experiences and perceptions of the inner world. The components of the questionnaire are well-being, self-control, emotionality and sociability. After processing the results, it is clear that there are differences in the factors of emotional intelligence at different ages. The influence of gender on these constructs was also revealed. This provides a reason for future research work on the components of emotional intelligence and its relationship with personality traits, temperament and self-efficacy of the individual.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, well-being, self-control, emotionality, expansiveness, early adulthood

1. INTRODUCTION

Emotions occupy a significant role in determining a person's activities and behaviors personally and professionally. Emotional intelligence (EI) defines an individual's ability to sense, control, and manage his or her own and others' emotions. EI is defined as an ability by Mayer and Salovey (1997) and as a mixture of skills and traits (Bar-On 1997; Goleman 1995; Schutte et al. 1998; Petrides 2004).

Emotional intelligence is a basic ability that can be developed (Emmerling & Goleman 2003) and learned (Shapiro 1997; Goleman 1998) at all ages, as most theories of this phenomenon indicate. EI is not developed in infancy, nor is it inherited. With age, one becomes more socially and emotionally intelligent (Bar-On 2006).

For about two decades, the problem of emotional intelligence has increasingly attracted the attention of scientists in various fields and has been actively developed. Not surprisingly, this construct has been identified as one of the key so-called "soft" skills in the last five years, leading to strong competitiveness and career achievement. Overachievers who have achieved significant professional success possess a high level of emotional intelligence development. It provides them with "the internal resilience needed to cope with stress, low self-esteem, internal defeat, and depression" (Holden 2012: 279). "Thinking through feelings", i.e. using one's emotional intelligence, one establishes better relationships and makes better choices both personally and professionally (Noyes 2011: 11). Men pass through different stages in his life called age periods. And each stage is distinguished by a characteristic that manifests itself through learning and experience. In particular, emotional intelligence, when taken as a capability (Mayer & Salovey), is also characterized by different patterns with increasing age. This necessitates an understanding of different levels of EI and its nature at different ages. The present study is an attempt to determine the emotional intelligence of different age groups and to find the differences in the components of EI - well-being, self-control, emotionality and sociability among these groups. The latter are early maturity (20-22 years) and middle maturity (23-38 years).

¹ The publication is part of the project funded by the National Science Fund SP23-PF-009 "Integration of Innovative Behavioral Models for Psychosocial Support and Quality of Life," led by Prof. Dr. Mayiana Mitevka.

1.1 Emotional intelligence

Emotions are reactions to stimuli (1579), and intelligence includes the mental capacities needed to adapt to, as well as to shape and select different environmental contexts (Sternberg 1997). EI is considered intelligence because it has the ability to solve problems and observe emotions in oneself and others. There are three main models of emotional intelligence, John Mayer and Peter Salovey's ability model, Daniel Goleman's mixed model, and K.V. Petrides' trait model. Mayer, Salovey and their colleagues define EI as the cognitive ability to perceive, evaluate, understand, express and manage one's own and others' emotions. For this reason, researchers have focused on measuring maximal performance through the use of task-based tests. Furthermore, EI is viewed as a learnable ability rather than an innate characteristic. Bar-On and Goleman's mixed models (Bar-On 1997; Goleman 1995) define EI as both an ability and a personality trait, i.e., they emphasize a range of abilities and skills. The focus is on typical manifestations and self-assessment questionnaires are used as instruments (Kewalramani, Agrawal & Rastogi 2015). According to trait models (e.g., Adrian Furnham and Constantine Petrides), the phenomenon of emotional intelligence is a combination of an individual's emotionally intense subjective perceptions and beliefs about the stability of the qualities by which he or she manages emotions (Kardasheva 2012; Kewalramani, Agrawal & Rastogi 2015).

The components of emotional intelligence in the present study are well-being, self-control, emotionality, and sociability. High scores on the well-being factor reflect an overall sense of satisfaction and joy that extend from past accomplishments to future expectations. High scores on the self-control factor indicate a good degree of control over impulses and desires. Emotionality reflects the degree of recognizing and expressing emotions as well as maintaining close relationships with significant others. Sociability differs from emotionality in that it emphasizes social contact and influence. The focus is on the person as an actor in a variety of social contexts rather than in personal relationships with family and friends.

1.2 Emotional intelligence and age

There is a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and age. Emotional intelligence develops or increases with age and experience (Goleman 1998; Salovey & Mayer 1990; Maddocks & Sparrows 1998). In a number of studies, EI has been found to increase with age, at least up to 40-50 years (Bar-on 2000; Kafetsios 2004; Stein 2009; Bradberry & Greaves 2005; Singh 2006). There are certain aspects of emotional intelligence that can only be developed through training (Fariselli, Ghini, & Freedman 2006). One of the studies done is that of the Bar-on model (Bar-on 1988) using the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i -Emotional Quotient Inventory). The persons studied were 3891 and were aged between 20 and 50 years. The study found that older people scored higher on the emotional intelligence construct compared to younger people. In addition, people towards the end of their 40s have on-higher mean scores (Bar-On 1997b; Bar-On 2004).

Taking into account the results presented above, the present study aims to detect the presence of change in emotional intelligence and its components with advancing age (from 20 to 38 years) using the trait model and the Petrides questionnaire. For this reason, the target group was divided into two- early maturity from 20 to 22 years and middle maturity from 23 to 38 years. In addition, the correlation between the different components as well as the influence of gender is monitored.

2. Methods

2.1 Subjects, procedure and statistical treatment

The study was conducted with 67 participants aged between 20 and 38 years. All of them were studying in undergraduate programmes at a Bulgarian university. The undergraduate programmes themselves were in the humanities. The participants were divided into two groups- early maturity, with the age of the subjects between 20 and 22 years, and middle maturity, with the age between 23 and 38 years. The study was based on the results obtained from the full Petrides self-assessment questionnaire, adapted into Bulgarian by Dr. Antonina Kardasheva. The components of the questionnaire are well-being, self-control, emotionality and sociability. The main aim of the study is to analyze the empirical projections of the factors of emotional intelligence according to the trait model at different ages, as well as their interrelationship. For this purpose, the SPSS-21 tools were used.

2.2 Methods

The Petrides Questionnaire to Measure Emotional Intelligence as a Personality Trait (TEIQue SF), short version, contains 30 statements, with response options on a seven-point scale from 1, corresponding to completely disagree, to 7, corresponding to completely agree. Emotional intelligence as a trait characteristic can be defined as a set of emotional perceptions assessed by questionnaires and rating scales (Petrides, Pita, & Kokkinaki 2007). Thus considered, emotional intelligence refers to a person's perceptions of his or her internal world.

3. Results

Table 1. Descriptive statistics [Descriptive statistics]

	N	Min	Max	M	SD
Audience	67	1.83	7.00	4.46	1.05
Prosperity	67	1.17	7.00	5.29	1.47
Self-Control	67	1.67	6.33	4.34	1.22
Emotionality	67	1.88	7.00	5.07	1.07

As can be seen from the above table, there are high mean values for the well-being and emotionality components, with well-being having the highest value. Feeling of well-being indicates, that respondents find life enjoyable and are satisfied overall. They have a positive view of themselves, believe in their abilities, are well disposed to most things and believe that their lives will settle down well. The emotionality factor means that individuals have no problem expressing their emotions, can put themselves in another's place, and can show affection and love to those close to them. The persons studied think about their feelings and can identify what emotions they are experiencing. They also maintain close relationships with significant others and treat them fairly.

3.1 Correlations

Table 2. Correlation between the components of emotional intelligence [Table 2 Correlation between the components of emotional intelligence

	Audience	Prosperity	Self-Control	Emotionality
Audience	1	.525**	.391**	.469**
		.000	.001	.000
Prosperity	.525**	1	.403**	.729**
	.000		.001	.000
Self-Control	.391**	.403**	1	.403**
	.001	.001		.001
Emotionality	.469**	.729**	.403**	1
	.000	.000	.001	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From this table it can be seen that there is a high correlation between the components of emotionality and well-being. Emotionality indicates that individuals can express and interpret emotions appropriately and use these abilities to develop and maintain close relationships with significant others. This contributes to a stronger sense of well-being, a positive perception of life, and feelings of joy and satisfaction. People who are most satisfied with life have close and supportive families and friends, while those who do not have close friends or families tend to be dissatisfied. There is also a strong correlation between well-being and sociability. Sociability implies better social skills, listening skills and getting along with people from different backgrounds. This fact also contributes to subjective well-being. The relationship between the components is confirmed by other studies (Mo'ira Mikolajczak and Olivier Luminet 2007).

Table 3. Differences of the components of emotional intelligence and age]

Emotional intelligence	Age	N	M	SD	F	Sig.
Audience	Under 22 years	50	4.54	0.92	1.11	.296
	Over 22 years	17	4.23	1.39		
Prosperity	Under 22 years	50	5.51	1.43	4.59	.036
	Over 22 years	17	4.65	1.46		
Self-Control	Under 22 years	50	4.34	1.23	0.00	1.000
	Over 22 years	17	4.34	1.21		
Emotionality	Under 22 years	50	5.22	1.03	4.34	.041
	Over 22 years	17	4.61	1.09		

It can be seen from the table that there are differences in the under 22 and over 22 groups. The components with the highest significance in relation to age are well-being and emotionality. These components are more pronounced in the under 22 group, which partly explains the fact that young people are filled with more optimism, cheerfulness, positivity, are more emotional and have a greater need to establish close relationships with others.

Table 4. Differences of the components of emotional intelligence and gender]

	Gender	N	M	SD	F	Sig.
Audience	Men	12	4.46	1.21	0.00	.998
	Women	55	4.46	1.03		
Prosperity	Men	12	5.21	1.67	0.05	.832
	Women	55	5.31	1.44		
Self-Control	Men	12	4.93	1.09	3.54	.065
	Women	55	4.22	1.21		
Emotionality	Men	12	4.43	0.92	5.56	.021
	Women	55	5.21	1.06		

From the table presented, it can be found that women have higher mean values on the emotionality factor and men have higher value on the self-control factor. This result indicates that females experience a greater range of emotions and have a greater need for close contact, while males are somewhat better at regulating and controlling external stresses and at not being susceptible to stress. Comparable findings have been reported by other studies (Mořira Mikolajczak and Olivier Luminet 2007).

4. Conclusion

Based on the research done, it can be concluded that the components of emotional intelligence undergo change with age. Some of them are distinguished by high interrelation with each other. In addition, the values of the components vary in males and females, which determines gender as one of the key factors in the study of emotional intelligence.

At this stage, due to the limited nature of the study, it would be inaccurate to generalize the results presented due to the characteristics of the sample (limited number of study subjects, one university, etc.). However, the findings are important to orient the situation and it is worth including individuals from other universities and specialties

when planning future research.

REFERENCES:

1. Karabelyova, S. (2015). Career choice. Intercultural and intracultural comparisons. Izdatelstvo "Klasika I stil" OOD (in Bulgarian).
2. Kardasheva, A. (2012), Za emotsionalnata inteligentnost i individualnite razlichija na bylgarite. Sofia: Kovachev. [Emotional intelligence and individual differences of Bulgarians. Sofia: Kovachev] (in Bulgarian)
3. Noyes, R. (2011). Izkustvoto da rykovodish sebe si. The art of leading yourself. Tap the power of your emotional intelligence. Sofia, Persei] (in Bulgarian)
4. Holdun, R. (2012). Success Intelligence. Sofia, Silver bell (in Bulgarian)
5. Bar-On, R. (1997). Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory: a user's manual. New York: Multi-Health Systems.
6. Bar-On, R., & Parker, J.D.A. (2000b). the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory: Youth Version. Technical Manual. north tonawanda, NY: Multi-Health Systems.
7. Bar-On, R. (2004). The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i): Rationale, description, and summary of psychometric properties. In Glenn Geher (Ed.), *Measuring emotional intelligence: Common ground and controversy*. Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers, pp. 111-142.
8. Bar-On, R. (2006). The Bar-On model of emotional-social intelligence (ESI). *Psicothema*, Vol. 18, Supp. 13-25.
9. Emmerling, R.J., & Goleman, D. (2003). Emotional intelligence: issues and common misunderstandings. *Issues in Emotional Intelligence - 1(1)* - www.eiconsortium.org
10. Fariselli, L., Ghini, M., & Freedman J. (2006). White Paper: Age and Emotional Intelligence, Sixseconds.
11. Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
12. Goleman, D. (1998a). *Working with emotional intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books.
13. Goleman, D. (1998b). 'What makes a leader?', *Harvard Business Review*, Nov-Dec: 93-102.
14. Kafetsios, K. (2004). Attachment and emotional intelligence abilities across the life course. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 37,129-145.
15. Kewalramani, S., Agrawal, M., Rastogi, M. R. (2015). Models of emotional intelligence: Similarities and discrepancies. *Indian Journal of Positive Psychology*, 6 (2), 178-181. Available at: http://www.iahrv.com/index.php/home/journal_detail/19#list [Last accessed 20.05.2018].
16. Mayer, J.D., & Salovey, P. (1993). 'The intelligence of emotional intelligence', *Intelligence*, 12, 433-422.
17. Maddocks, J., & Sparrow, T. (1998). *The individual effectiveness manual*. JCA (Occupational Psychologist) Ltd, Cheltenham, UK.
18. Mitevska-Encheva M., Petkov G. (2017) Lichnostni proektsii varhu udovletvorenostta ot zhivota. Godishna mezhdunarodna universitetska nauchna konferentsiya, Natsionalen voenen universitet "V.Levski", Shumen, 4-6 oktombri 2017. ISSN 1314-1937 [Personal projections on life satisfaction] (in Bulgarian)
19. Mo'ira Mikolajczak and Olivier Luminet (2007) Psychometric Properties of the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire: Factor Structure, Reliability, Construct, and Incremental Validity in a French-Speaking Population *JOURNAL OF PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT*, 88(3), 338-353
20. Petrides, K. V., Pita, R., & Kokkinaki, F. (2007). The location of trait emotional intelligence in personality factor space. *British Journal of Psychology*, 98, 273-289 Available at <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.476.8331&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
21. Salovey, P., & Mayer, J.D. (1990). 'Emotional intelligence', *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9: 185-211.
22. Schutte, N. S., Malouff, J. M., Simunek, M., Hollander, S., & McKenley, J. (2002). Characteristic emotional intelligence and emotional well-being. *Cognition and Emotion*, 16, 769-786
23. Singh, D. (2006). *Emotional Intelligence at Work: A Professional Guide* (third Ed.). New Delhi
24. Stein, J.S. (2009). *Emotional Intelligence for Dummies*. ON: John Wiley & Sons Canada, Ltd.
25. Sternberg, R. J. (1997). The concept of intelligence and its role in lifelong learning and success. *American Psychologist*, 52(10), 1030-1037.