THE INTRAPERSONAL FIELD OF SOCIO-EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE. FROM SELF-KNOWLEDGE TO EMOTION MANAGEMENT*

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Abstract

Research shows that emotional intelligence provides a variety of useful acquisitions during one's life. Higher EQ levels are associated with an increased likelihood of inner balance and positive interactions with others.

The study aims to address the intrapersonal dimension of emotional intelligence, namely the relationship with ourselves, with an emphasis on self-knowledge, self-awareness of emotions, emotions representing the link between thought, feeling and action.

The proposed experimental program aimed at carrying out counseling activities focused on self-knowledge, on developing a clear and correct self-image. The research data showed that counseling activities cause positive changes in attitudes: self-confidence, optimism, enthusiasm.

Key words: Socio-emotional intelligence; Self-knowledge; Self-awareness; Emotions; Self-esteem.

1. Introduction

In the 1920's, American psychologist Edward Thorndike spoke of "social intelligence". Later, in the 1940's, David Wechsler, one of the fathers of IQ tests, emphasized the importance of "emotional factors", in fact he was referring to social and emotional intelligence, which he considered important when considering general intelligence. Unfortunately, these factors were not given much attention at the time. In 1948, another American researcher, R.W. Leeper promoted the idea of "emotional thinking" which was believed to contribute to logical thinking (Stein, Book, 2003, p. 15).

In 1983, Howard Gardner of Harvard University wrote about the possibility of "multiple intelligences". Howard Gardner, through the theory of multiple intelligences, introduced the best-known scientific precedent of emotional

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intelligence: of the eight intelligences, the intrapersonal and the interpersonal are the most directly related to emotional intelligence (Fernández-Berrocal, 2021, p. 18).

Professor Gardner's concept was developed by Jack Mayer of the University of New Hampshire and Peter Salovey of Yale University. In 1990, they formally used the term "emotional intelligence".

2. Emotional intelligence - definition, domains / areas

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is defined by the ability to perceive, evaluate, and control one's emotions and can have a significant impact on various elements of daily life (Palmer, Donaldson, & Stough 2002).

John Mayer and Peter Solovey (1990, p. 23) define emotional intelligence as "the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to support thinking, to understand emotions and their meaning, and to effectively regulate emotion, to determine the improvement of emotional and intellectual development".

Emotional intelligence is a preventative measure against inappropriate behavior, it can help reduce the risk of extreme violence in schools (Stein, Book, 2003, p. 7).

We can also approach it as an important quality that helps you to overcome in the best possible way, to make good choices based on wise thinking and to enjoy excellent relationships with others (Wilding, 2018, p. 45). We present in the table below, the advantages related to EI, as they are outlined in the author's opinion:

Table 1. Advantages related to emotional intelligence
(Wilding, 2018, p. 45)

GOOD SELF-KNOWLEDGE	leads to ... good self-control
SENSITIVITY TO OTHERS AND TO THEIR FEELINGS	leads to... good relationships with others

Emotional intelligence defined as the ability to make sound decisions, based on accurate identification, understanding and managing both one's own feelings and those of others (Cope, Bradley, 2019, p. 21), came as a critique of the classical concept of intelligence, which was considered a "unique feature by which the individual was born with a potential and genetically predetermined limits, difficult to modify and easily assessed by classical tests of intelligence" (Fernández-Berrocal, 2021, p. 17).

The main elements / foundations of emotional intelligence that give its overall structure are identified by Reuven Bar-On, which identified the following five domains or areas (Figure 1):
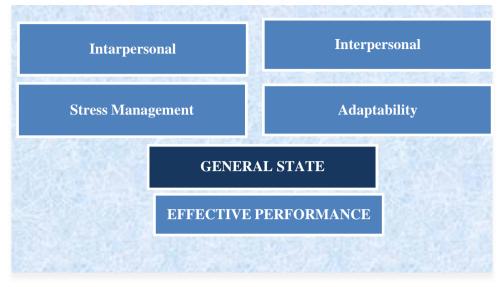
Figure 1. The BarOn model (with Stein, Book, 2003, p. 21)

Intrapersonal domain - refers to the capacity for self-knowledge and self-control; it includes:
- Emotional self-awareness - recognition of feelings and impact on self and others;
- Assertive character in expressing thoughts and feelings;
- Independence - self-control and self-direction;
- Self-respect - knowing the strengths and accepting the weaknesses;
- Self-fulfillment - recognition of potential, personal and professional satisfaction.

Interpersonal domain - refers to the ability to interact and collaborate with other people; it consists of three stages:
- Empathy - understanding others;
- Social responsibility - cooperating and active member of the social group;
- Interpersonal relationships - build and maintain beneficial relationships.

The field of adaptability
- Reality testing - seeing things as they are and as we would like them to be;
- Flexibility - adaptation to the situation;
- Problem solving - define problems, then collaborate and implement effective solutions.

The field of stress management - refers to the ability to tolerate stress and control impulses. Its two stages are:
- Stress tolerance - stay calm and focused;

- Pulse control - to resist or delay the reaction to a certain impulse to act.

General condition domain - has two stages:
- Optimism - to maintain a positive attitude in the face of difficult moments;
- Happiness - to be satisfied with life, the joy of oneself and others, enthusiasm.

All these "parts" that make up the EQ can be enhanced depending on the situation and can be improved through training, guidance and experience.

In social relationships, empathy is an important structure of emotional intelligence. A wide variety of definitions and metaphors have been provided by the literature on empathy:

➢ entering into the feelings and experiences of the other (Compton and Gallaway, 1994);

➢ taking the other's perspective (Sheafor, Horejsi and Horejsi, 1994).

Currently, research addresses empathy as a dimension of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2001).

The literature shows that cognitive empathy skills can be more easily learned and trained than emotional empathy skills. Emotional empathy could only be introduced in a guided empathic training and depends largely on the healthy functioning of the ego. In general, empathetic errors can be linked to personal anxiety

Empathy, as a way of "knowing" the other, is necessary in optimizing interpersonal relationships, so many training programs have been developed, it is a perfectible phenomenon. If empathy is essential in relationships with others, in self-knowledge represents the core.

3. Self-knowledge - an essential step in the development of students' socio-emotional skills

In emotional development, the relationship with ourselves, self-knowledge, self-awareness - is the first stage.

It is important that socio-emotional skills development programs contribute to the development of stress coping skills. Kaslow (2020) argues that stress management programs should focus on identifying the psychological signs and symptoms of stress, supporting management and reactions to stressors caused by the situation, and finding resources for emotional support and healthy behavior.

3.1. Exploring emotions and self-knowledge

Emotions are the link between thought, feeling and action - "they affect many aspects of a person, and the person influences many aspects of emotions" (Mayer, 2000 apud Hasson, 2016, p. 16).

The ability to develop emotional intelligence depends largely on self-image. Self-esteem.

Regardless of the development, wealth and prosperity that hypermodern societies have reached, the questions remain: Who am I? How can I understand others? If it is already difficult to understand ourselves, knowing those around us is even more difficult (Fernàndez-Berrocal, 2021, p. 11).

Self-image tells us how good we feel about ourselves, it reflects our personal level of self-acceptance, for better or worse (Hughes, Terrell, 2013, p. 45). Specifically, it represents:

- how a person perceives their own physical, cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual characteristics;
- mental representation of one's own person;
- organized structure of self-knowledge that guides social behavior;
- our ability to evaluate ourselves correctly and realistically, to be able to accept and appreciate ourselves as we are, to realistically know our strengths and weaknesses.

Self-esteem refers to:

- ✓ how we evaluate ourselves, how "good" we consider ourselves compared to our own expectations or those of others;
- ✓ the evaluative and affective dimension of the self-image;
- ✓ positive self-esteem is the feeling of self-esteem and self-confidence.

3.2. How do we manage our emotions to be successful?

Research shows (David, 2016, p. 12) emotional rigidity - attachment to thoughts, emotions and behaviors that no longer help us - is associated with a number of psychological disorders, such as depression and anxiety. Instead, emotional agility - being flexible in thoughts and emotions to respond optimally to everyday situations - is essential to feeling good and successful.

Emotional agility means, says the author, to relax, calm down and live with more intention.

It is not what happens to us that determines how we feel emotionally, but the significance that we attribute to those events. Even if negative thoughts and emotions appear, we can spot them immediately and analyze how unrealistic and useless they are (Wilding, 2018, p. 95).

When negative thoughts arise, it is advisable to ask: Is that so? Can situations be viewed differently?

Socio-emotional intelligence is based on the appropriate use of emotions to solve problems and adapt effectively to the environment (Salovey, Mayer apud Fernảndez-Berrocal, 2021, p. 27) and can be summarized in a hierarchical pattern (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Emotional intelligence model
(Salovey, Mayer apud Fernàndez-Berrocal, 2021)

The EISA, developed by Steven Stein, Derek Mann and Peter Papadogiannis (2009, Hughes, Terrell, 2013), identifies the following key factors in emotional intelligence (Figure 3):
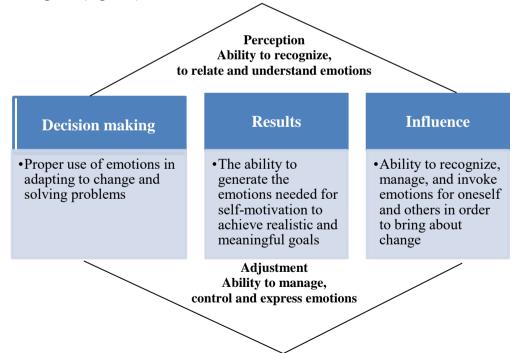

Figure 3. EISA Model (Stein, Mann, Papadoginnis, 2009, apud Hughes,
Terrell, 2013)

The three keys to gaining emotional security are (Lindefield, 2001):

a) Taming the temperament - by understanding the emotional states and abilities to exercise control;

b) Calming sensitivity - through effective emotional healing - 7 stages of emotional healing: exploring the wound of the soul, expressing feelings caused by the wound, comforting / receiving support from external sources, compensation / finding means of compensation for the wound, perspective / addressing the wound in a broader context, channeling / using the experience of the injury constructively, forgiving

c) Stringing harmful habits - through positive strategies applied to feelings out of control (guilt, anger, guilt, envy, apathy, etc.)

Traditional intelligence (high IQ) has not been enough for success in life (...) Socio-emotionally intelligent individuals are able to recognize what they are feeling and intentionally generate other moods to achieve their goals (Yeung, 2018, p. 13).

Emotional intelligence is not necessarily a characteristic we are born with, it can be acquired and developed. The development of emotional intelligence is a never ending process. By developing emotional intelligence we increase our self-knowledge, self-control, understand the emotions, thoughts and motivations of others, and build valuable relationships with them.

Emotional intelligence is expressed through the student's ability to learn and his ability to successfully adapt to the new situations that school life offers. Its development is based on:

a) a good self-knowledge, awareness of one's own personality and the personality of others;

b) stimulating and training the ability to actively listen and the skills to support the other;

c) last but not least, by developing the abilities to recognize, identify and understand both one's own emotions, feelings, feelings, and those of others.

On the one hand, knowing emotions means being able to identify them, to adapt them to each situation, on the other hand, the more you communicate with others, the more you develop the ability to understand and the more empathy increases.

4. Research methodology

The present study aims to emphasize the importance of self-knowledge in the development of students' emotional intelligence, so that they are able to adapt optimally to various situations.

The ability to develop emotional intelligence depends largely on the degree of self-knowledge. We can learn to think positively, to replace harmful beliefs about emotions with more useful, more mobilizing ones, starting from a good self-knowledge.

In the research undertaken we outlined the following general hypothesis:

If the teacher creates and trains students in experiences of self-knowledge, then progress can be made in attitude and emotion management (positive attitude in the face of difficult times, optimism, self-confidence, enthusiasm). The research was

conducted at the University of Craiova, and the sample included a number of 90 students enrolled in the psycho-pedagogical module.

In summary, the sequence of these steps is represented in the following table (table no. 2):

Table 2. Temporal succession of research stages

Nr. crt	Research stages	Timeframe	Purpose
1.	*The ascertaining stage*	October 2021	Gathering some necessary starting data in outlining an overview of the studied problem;
2.	*The experimental stage*	November 2021-March 2022	Introduction of the independent variable in the experiment
3.	*Posttest stage*	April-May 2022	Comparison of data obtained from processing, interpretations, comparisons

The designed experimental program aimed at carrying out online counseling activities focused on self-knowledge, self-awareness and self-image, developing a clear and correct self-image.

The question "Who am I?" it is one of the great dilemmas of existence, and the process of finding the answer is a complex and continuous one. Self-knowledge is important because everything that happens in the outside world reflects our inner state, the way we perceive the situations we face is the first step towards managing stress. Therefore, the activities carried out aimed to answer the participants with questions such as:
   - What are my qualities, values and resources?
   - How can I use my resources optimally?
   - How do I feel about self-confidence and self-esteem?
   - How do our way of thinking, personal beliefs and decisions influence us?

In the experiment, we focused on using methods such as: SWOT analysis, "Who am I?", "My advertising poster", "My values", "My diploma", "I describe / draw myself" etc.

We also provided students with a Google Classroom platform, through which they can go through various materials, reflection tasks, questionnaires and tests of self-knowledge, even psycho-vocational guidance. At the same time, any student could request an individual online counseling activity.

Other research methods I used in this research were: observation, questionnaire and interview, which followed:

We tried to get answers to the following questions: Do students attach importance to self-knowledge activities in their personal and professional development? How do the subjects behave, in the didactic activity after a better self-knowledge, does their attitude change at the level of involvement / activation in the

didactic activity? But in terms of self-confidence, does better self-knowledge lead to increased self-confidence?

The questionnaire for students included 13 questions that reflect the following dimensions: the importance of self-knowledge activities for academic success; participation in counseling and personal development activities; the impact of counseling activities on self-confidence and self-esteem.

5. Results and discussions

The majority of the surveyed students, respectively 95%, consider that it is necessary to carry out counseling and career guidance activities in the faculty. 2% of students considered that these activities are not necessary, and 3% - did not answer this question (Table 3 and Figure 4).

Table 3. Students' opinion on the need for self-knowledge activities in personal and professional development

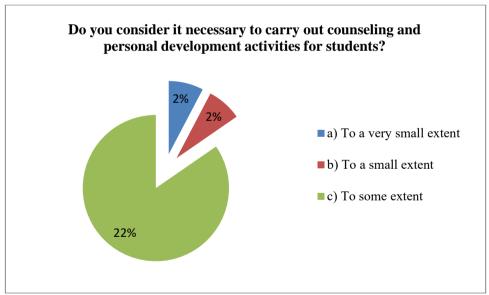| Do you consider it necessary to carry out counseling and personal development activities for students?	Percentage
a) Yes	95%
b) No	2%
c) Don't know/Don't want to answer	3%

Figure 4. The students assessment of the need for self-knowledge activities in personal and professional development

Regarding the extent of the importance of counseling and personal development activities provided to students for success in life, 39% of students

considered that they are largely important, 32% considered that they are very important, 22% in some measure. However, there is a percentage of 2% who consider that these activities are important to a small extent and also 2% - to a very small extent (Table 4 and Figure 5).

Table 4. Measuring the importance of self-knowledge activities for success in life

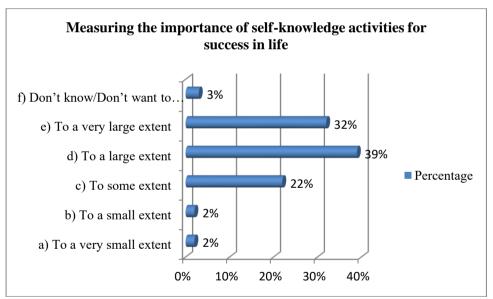| To what extent do you think counseling and personal development are important for success in life?	Percentage
a) To a very small extent	2%
b) To a small extent	2%
c) To some extent	22%
d) To a large extent	39%
e) To a very large extent	32%
f) Don't know/Don't want to answer	3%

Figure 5. Measuring the importance of self-knowledge activities for success in life

Regarding the needs expressed by students regarding counseling and personal development, it seems that the most important is the need for self-knowledge, appreciated by 37% of students, followed by the need to manage emotions (33%), the need to develop confidence in itself (22%) and the development of personal promotion skills -7% (Table 5 and Figure 6).

Table 5. Needs expressed by students regarding counseling and personal development

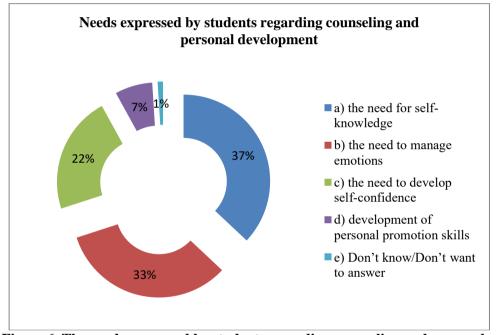| Needs expressed by students regarding counseling and personal development	Percentage
a) the need for self-knowledge	37%
b) the need to manage emotions	33%
c) the need to develop self-confidence	22%
d) development of personal promotion skills	7%
e) Don't know/Don't want to answer	1%

Figure 6. The needs expressed by students regarding counseling and personal development

Most of the students who participated in counseling and personal development activities, respectively 93%, felt their impact positively; only 2% said they had a negative impact on them, and 5% did not answer this question (Table 6 and Figure 7).

Table 6. Impact of counseling and personal development activities

The needs expressed by students regarding counseling and personal development	Percentage
a) positive impact	93%
b) negative impact	2%
c) Don't know/Don't want to answer	5%

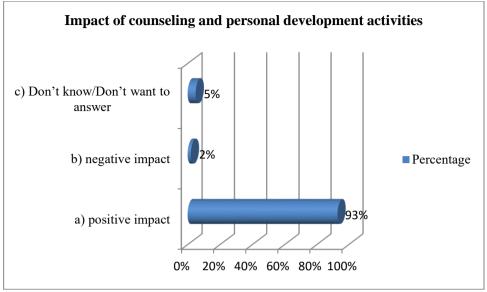**Impact of counseling and personal development activities**

Figure 7. The impact of counseling and personal development activities

6. Conclusions

The special importance of counseling and personal development activities is realized by students, given the fact that it brings multiple academic and social benefits, namely: increases motivation for academic activities, increases optimism and general well-being.

The results of the application of questionnaires and tests during the experimental activities showed that emotionally intelligent students have the following characteristics:

- are aware of their own emotions and even express them;
- recognize the emotions of those around you;
- communicates easily about what interests or concerns them;
- know how to say NO without hurting others;
- have a good management of negative emotions;
- behave reasonably even when things are not going the way they would like and do not give up an activity, even when it becomes difficult;
- they do not do some activities just because they need to, but they do them because they understand that they are useful for their own development;
- when they feel they can't handle it, they ask for help;
- adapts quickly to new situations / people;
- are not afraid to ask questions or state their preferences.

At the end of the experiment, the students confessed that they were aware of the progress at the attitudinal level: attitude towards self (30%), reporting to the context and attitude towards others (23%): self-confidence in the face of difficult moments (27 %), optimism (12%), enthusiasm (8%).

Table 7. Progress at the attitudinal level in the field of self-knowledge activities

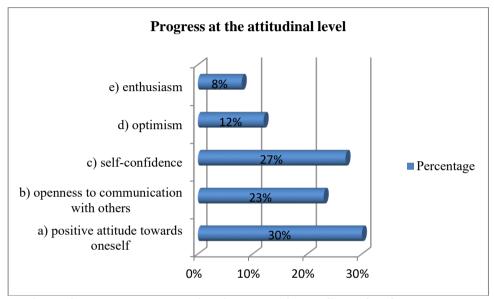| Progress at the attitudinal level	Percentage
a) positive attitude towards oneself	30%
b) openness to communication with others	23%
c) self-confidence	27%
d) optimism	12%
e) enthusiasm	8%

Figure 8. Progress at the attitudinal level, in the field of self-knowledge activities

The data collected following the application of the questionnaire were completed by focus-group interviews which highlighted the following aspects:

a) in order to develop self-confidence, the students considered the following dimensions to be very important: a) the use of a methodology that would activate the student, that would encourage him to take control over his own training; b) developing self-confidence through positive feedback (praise, appreciation, encouragement); c) supporting the student to develop a positive attitude towards himself;

b) self-esteem can be developed by:
- Identifying and emphasizing a special talent or hobby;
- Emphasis on positive stimulation;
- Discovering needs and interests;
- Giving up criticism (Ex: "I was worried (emotion) when you didn't come home from school (behavior description), because I thought something had happened to you (the consequence of the behavior)";

- Offering alternatives, not advice such as "That's the best way to go" or "You should do this". Advice does not help the individual to learn to solve his problems, but makes him dependent on another person;
- Discovering alternatives. Helping the person to choose a solution. Discuss possible outcomes and consequences for oneself and others. Establish a plan for implementing the chosen solution.

c) a good self-knowledge leads to the acceptance of both strengths and weaknesses, to choices consistent with one's personality and, implicitly, to a better management of emotions.

The research undertaken showed, in the initial stage, a low level of capacity for reflection and, implicitly, for self-knowledge. Following the intervention, the capacity for reflection and self-knowledge, self-confidence and optimism increased significantly.

Following the analysis, processing and interpretation of the data collected, it can be concluded that the implementation of an intervention program focused on self-knowledge and personal development, has led to changes in attitudes (self-attitude, positive attitude in difficult times, self-confidence, enthusiasm) and better stress management.

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