

THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF STUDENTS WHO ARE SITTING A SPECIAL-ABILITY EXAMINATION

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We aimed to detect the differences in emotional intelligence in young people according to some sociodemographic variables. A total of 170 people who were sitting a special-ability examination in order to gain a place in the physical education and sports teaching department at a university formed the sample. We found that there were statistically significant differences in emotional intelligence levels according to the variables of age, hometown, participation in social and sports activities, self-description, and description of family, as well as in the behaviors of the families towards the adolescent. There were no significant differences according to gender, alma mater, or the income level of the family.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, sport, family attitude, adolescence, sports.

Rapid change is the reality of the modern age. One of the most important factors of rapid change is the use of social and emotional skills, which assume an ever greater importance in human relations. Problems arising from emotions and social interaction can be solved through the presence of individuals who can control

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their own feelings, analyze the feelings of the others, and develop empathy. Such people are also innovative and have high levels of awareness. Accordingly, the adaptation of teachers to change and to processes of improvement is important, so that they can better acquire those qualities.

Mayer and Salovey (1990) define the *emotional quotient* (EQ) as *a subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions*. Shapiro (1998) describes emotional intelligence as *the ability to sense, understand, and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy, information, connection, and influence*. Alternatively, Cooper and Sawaf (2003) define emotional intelligence as *the intelligence area that helps people to react appropriately by reflecting information about the emotions and the energy of emotions to life and work, as well as to identify and evaluate their own feelings and the feelings of others*.

To display emotional intelligence is to try to acquire positive results via the emotions in order to use those emotions cleverly, that is, to direct behaviors. The complexity level of the work determines the importance of emotional intelligence. Uncontrolled emotions can lower the productivity of intelligent people (Goleman, 2000). People with a high level intelligence quotient (IQ) can fail, while people displaying a high level of emotional intelligence (EQ) can achieve more positive results (Mayer & Salovey, 1990). People with high levels of emotional intelligence are more positive and harmonious in their professional lives and they become successful in their professions by working with others effectively (Parker, 2002; Parker, Summerfeldt, Hogan, & Majeski, 2004).

Abilities relating to emotional intelligence are grouped under five headings in some research (Stein & Book, 2003). The first three headings concern self-management and the last two headings relate to relationship management. They are as follows: *self-awareness, emotion management, self-activation, empathy, and relationship management* (Stein & Book).

Consequently, the process of using emotional intelligence to arrange emotions becomes an organized system with cognitive and emotional aspects. The development of emotional intelligence is parallel to cognitive development. In this context, development of the emotional intelligence initiates with the interaction of the individual (Patrick, Denis, & Vandamme, 2001). It is stressed by researchers of emotional intelligence that educational activities to develop this should be part of the teaching-learning process. The development of emotional intelligence is important at all educational stages from kindergarten to higher education, learning cannot happen independently of the emotions of the individual, academic intelligence can be used more effectively when emotional intelligence is developed. Emotional intelligence is regarded as the touchstone of success in all aspects of life (Shapiro, 1999; Yeşilyaprak, 2001).

Emotional intelligence is a developable feature according to previous researchers of this topic (Dulewicz & Higgs, 1999). It is an important factor for the success of individuals in their social and professional lives. In the present study we aim to suggest directions for future studies by measuring the development of emotional intelligence. Accordingly, we aim to detect the differences in the emotional intelligence of young people according to selected sociodemographic variables.

The development of abilities such as communication skills and a humanitarian mindset, which are necessary for the solution of social conflicts and problems, is important in both a personal and a social sense. Problems arising from emotions and social interaction can be addressed by individuals who control their own feelings, analyze the feelings of the others, and develop empathy. Such individuals tend to be innovative and have high levels of awareness. Therefore, it is worth investigating the factors affecting levels of emotional intelligence in order to develop new approaches in the family setting and in educational institutions.

METHOD

The target population of the study comprised students who were taking special-ability examinations for physical education and sport teaching. The study sample was composed of 124 males and 46 females ($N = 170$) who took the special ability examinations at the Department of Physical Education and Sport Teaching in Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University's School of Physical Education and Sport.

The candidates taking these special ability examinations were informed about the aim of the study when they were collecting their application forms. The candidates were informed that the study was in no way related to the examination. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire items on a voluntary basis.

The questionnaire was provided to the candidates enclosed in an envelope with the application form. No time restriction was applied. Some of the questionnaire forms were collected the same day, some during the examination, and some at the time of collection of the application forms.

A survey method was used with the aim of obtaining information about the characteristics and past and present behaviors of the participants.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

A questionnaire method was selected as the data collection tool and the following scales were used:

Sociodemographic data collection form This form was filled in by all participants. There are ten different questions covering age, gender, alma mater,

graduation degree, hometown, income level of one's family, participation in social and sportive activities, self-description, and description of family, attitudes, and the behaviors of the families towards the adolescent.

The Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale This is a self-report scale comprising 33 items and is based on the emotional intelligence model developed by Mayer and Salovey (1990). Schutte et al. (1998) designated the scale as one dimensional. The internal consistency of the scale was $\alpha = 0.90$ (Schutte et al.). The reliability of the scale was high (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.82$) in the study by Chan (2006).

The scale is measured using a 5-point Likert-type rating as follows: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *slightly agree*, 4 = *agree*, and 5 = *strongly agree*. Questions with negative expressions (5, 28, 33) were assessed using reverse scoring. The theoretical basis of the scale is composed of three dimensions; accordingly, 10 items relate to optimism/mood regulation, 10 items relate to the utilization of emotions, and 13 items relate to the evaluation and expression of emotions. The scale is used to measure these three factors and general emotional intelligence.

In the present study, questionnaires were delivered to participants with the application form, and time was not limited. Questionnaire forms were collected during the return of the application forms. Participants were not informed that we were assessing emotional intelligence. It was indicated that we were researching ways to detect emotions and thoughts. In this way, an attempt was made to enhance the reliability of the scale. Three items (8, 11, 26) which decreased the reliability of the scale were excluded during the evaluation.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected from 170 students who participated in special ability examinations for physical education and sport teaching via a questionnaire method were evaluated in different categories and analyzed with the SPSS (version 15.0) package program. The statistical analyses are as follows:

1. The convenience of the data acquired using the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS) was tested with KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) and Bartlett's test of sphericity. According to the results, KMO was 0.89 and Bartlett was $X^2 = 2501.39$ ($p < .05$). Data which reached or exceeded the benchmark value (0.60) were considered convenient for factor analysis. Internal consistency (Cronbach's α) was measured during the reliability analysis of the scale and the result was 0.92. This rate indicates that collected data are appropriate for evaluation.

2. Frequency and percentiles were calculated in order to exhibit distribution of sample according to demographic variables.

3. In order to evaluate the differentiation level of the score averages gained on the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale according to independent variables

(since the data did not provide parametric test assumptions), Mann-Whitney's *U* test was used for nonparametric comparisons and Kruskal-Wallis (KW) analysis of variance was used for comparison of two or more groups. The statistical level of significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

Frequencies and percentages encompassing the data collected from the sample, demographical features of the sample, and descriptive information about the family were as follows:

In terms of the sample's age distribution, 6.5% of the participants were under the age of 18 ($n = 11$), 43% of the participants were aged between 18 and 20 ($n = 73$), 32.9% of the participants were aged between 21 and 23 ($n = 56$), and 17.6% of the participants were aged 24 or above ($n = 30$). Gender distribution of the participants indicates that 27.1% were female ($n = 46$) and the remaining 72.9% were male ($n = 124$). According to the alma mater distribution of the sample, 17.1% had graduated from vocational high school ($n = 29$), 73.5% had graduated from regular high school ($n = 125$), and 9.4% ($n = 16$) had graduated from an Anatolian high school/science high school ($n = 16$). The marks for school graduation examinations as described by the participants were as follows: 5.3% graduated with low marks ($n = 9$), 55.3% graduated with average marks ($n = 94$), 34.1% graduated with good marks ($n = 58$), and 5.3% graduated with excellent marks ($n = 9$). Distribution of hometown in the sample was as follows: 54.1% of the participants grew up in cities ($n = 92$), 26.5% grew up in towns ($n = 45$), and 19.4% grew up in villages ($n = 33$). Participation rate of the group in social and sporting activities (cinema, theatre, entertainment, group sports, and so on) was as follows: 87.6% of the participants engaged in such activities ($n = 149$) and 12.4% of the participants did not ($n = 21$). A total of 29.4% described themselves as introverted ($n = 50$) and 70.6% described themselves as extroverted ($n = 120$). According to distribution of the income level of the families, 19.4% came from families with a low income level ($n = 33$), 79.4% came from families with an average income level ($n = 135$) and 1.2% came from high-income families ($n = 2$). Descriptive information about the families indicates that 57.1% of the participants define their family as a nuclear family ($n = 97$), 38.8% define their family as an extended family ($n = 66$), and 4.1% of them define their family as a broken family ($n = 7$). The distribution of the attitudes of families towards participants was as follows: 41.8% were democratic ($n = 71$), 35.9% were protective ($n = 61$), 17.1% were authoritarian ($n = 29$), and 5.3% were neglectful ($n = 9$).

There was a statistically significant difference found between the levels of emotional intelligence according to age ($p < 0.05$); however, there was no

significant difference found according to gender. Also there was no significant difference according to alma mater or graduation level. The difference in terms of effect of hometown (city/district/village) on the emotional intelligence level was significant ($p < 0.05$). The difference in general emotional intelligence levels was statistically significant according to participation in social activities. Similarly, the difference in emotional intelligence levels according to introversion versus extroversion was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). There was not a significant difference according to the income level of the family, however there was a significant difference in emotional intelligence according to the comparisons of some variables about the family, the way they describe their family, and attitudes and behaviors of the families towards participants ($p < 0.01$) (Table 1).

The general emotional intelligence level of the group ranged between 57-150 and the average score was 125.04 (Table 2).

TABLE 1
COMPARISON OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE LEVELS OF SAMPLE GROUP
ACCORDING TO VARIABLES

Variables		(Emotional intelligence)			
		Statistics			
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i> \pm	(<i>U</i> test) <i>Z</i> / (KW) χ^2	<i>p</i>
Age	Under 18	111.8	18.9	7.93	0.047*
	18-20	125.8	13.8		
	21-23	126.1	10.8		
	24 and above	125.9	12.7		
Gender	Female	127.5	10.6	-1.80	0.071
	Male	124.1	14.3		
Alma mater	Vocational high school	122.8	19.0	0.75	0.687
	Regular high school	125.1	12.3		
	Science high school	127.7	9.6		
Graduation pass mark	Low	116.6	21.5	4.20	0.240
	Average	124.7	12.9		
	Good	126.9	9.4		
	Excellent	124.0	25.8		
Hometown	City	126.2	14.4	6.28	0.043*
	Town	125.4	10.2		
	Village	121.0	14.1		
Participation in social and sporting activities	Yes	126.1	12.8	-2.48	0.013*
	No	117.5	15.4		

Table 1 continued

		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i> ±	(<i>U</i> test) <i>Z</i> / (KW) <i>X</i> ²	<i>p</i>
Self-description	Introvert	116.9	16.6	-4.45	0.000**
	Extrovert	128.4	10.2		
Family income level	Low	124.7	13.4	1.00	0.605
	Middle	125.0	13.5		
	High	132.5	4.9		
Description of family	Nuclear family	124.4	12.8	13.56	0.001**
	Extended family	126.6	12.6		
	Broken family	104.1	13.6		
Attitudes and behaviors of family	Democratic	127.8	10.0	27.66	0.000**
	Protective	127.7	11.6		
	Authoritarian	121.4	9.4		
	Neglectful	95.6	21.6		

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

TABLE 2
STATISTICAL IDENTIFIERS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE LEVEL IN SAMPLE GROUP

	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i> ±
SEIS	170	57.00	150.00	125.0412	13.46763

DISCUSSION

The development of emotional intelligence is an important issue which primarily has a familial base (Kansu, 2002) and it should form part of the education process.

The development of abilities such as communication skills and empathy, which are necessary for the solution of social conflicts and problems in one's family, school, general environment and professional life, are important in both a personal and a social sense. Therefore, studies should be conducted to investigate the positive and negative factors affecting levels of emotional intelligence in both familial and educational contexts. The present researchers aimed to detect the differences in emotional intelligence of adolescents according to selected sociodemographic variables.

According to our statistical analysis, there is a significant difference in emotional intelligence in terms of age, but only for those aged under 18. However, the study is composed of limited age groups and the range of ages is narrow, so there may be a statistical weakness in this finding. The study by Mayer, Perkins, Caruso, and Salovey (2001) indicated that the 18-21 age group gained higher

scores than did the 13-16 age group in terms of emotional intelligence, and that emotional intelligence increases with age until at least the beginning of young adulthood. In another study, the relationship between emotional intelligence and the demographic features of 200 young people between the ages of 16 and 19 were analyzed and no significant difference was found in this age group (Harrod & Scheer, 2005).

We found no significant difference according to the variable of gender. However, the scores of the females were higher than those gained by the males. This can be associated with the importance females attribute to emotions (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 1999). According to some research (Bar-On, Brown, Kirkcaldy, & Thom  , 2000; Harrod & Scheer, 2005), there is not any difference between males and females in terms of emotional intelligence total scores, however, some researchers indicate that the scores of females in terms of emotional intelligence are higher than the scores of the males (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

We did not find a significant difference between groups in terms of the alma mater variable. Teachers make important contributions to the development of emotional intelligence in students from the level of primary school onwards. Differences in the type of the school do not cause differences in the level of emotional intelligence. There is not a significant difference according to the level of academic success; however, there is a difference between the group that gained bad grades and other groups (average, good, excellent levels of achievement) in terms of emotional intelligence total scores. In one study, the relationships between emotional intelligence, personality, academic intelligence, and life satisfaction were analyzed; it was found that the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic intelligence is not statistically significant (Ciarrochi, Chan, & Caputi, 2000). A study conducted in Canada was used to analyze the relationship between emotional intelligence, personality, and cognitive ability. According to the results of the study, both cognitive ability and personality features are related to academic success; however there is no significant relationship between the scores gained on the subscales, and those gained on the total emotional intelligence scale, and academic success (Newsome, Day, & Catano, 2000). Another group of researchers suggested that there is not a significant relationship between emotional intelligence scores and the students' grades (Wells, Torrie, & Prindle, 2000). The results of the present study are in line with these previous results.

We found a statistically significant difference in levels of emotional intelligence according to the hometown of the study group. The level of emotional intelligence is relatively low in people who grew up in villages. The inadequacy of their social environment, and the authoritarian communication model, as well as the dominant position of parents, had negative effects on the development of participants' self-concept and emotional intelligence.

According to the participation level in social and sports activities, there is a statistically significant difference in emotional intelligence levels. Social activities have positive effects on the development of interpersonal skills. People with developed skills will overcome problems and cope with stress more easily. Furthermore, adaptation problems will be fewer. People will more easily cope with the problems of professional and daily life through social activities and they will develop a more positive frame of mind (Öztürk, 2006). Results suggest that people with high levels of emotional intelligence have higher levels of participation in social activities. People who have strong interpersonal relationships will more easily enter a new circle of friends and adapt to new environments than those with weak interpersonal relationships. Mahoney and Stattin (2000) reported that adolescents with high antisocial tendencies have problems in benefiting from their leisure times. According to Brackett, antisocial individuals have difficulty in establishing and sustaining relationships with others, belonging to a group, and cooperating with a group (Brackett, Mayer, & Warner, 2003).

Self-descriptions (introverted or extroverted) have a significant effect on emotional intelligence; the emotional intelligence level of people who describe themselves as extroverted is relatively higher. Emotional intelligence generally concerns the social life of the individual. In the literature, typical introverts are withdrawn from society. They avoid people and seek solitude, have difficulty in establishing relationships with people, deal with daily life, events, and people with seriousness, enjoy a calm and unhurried life and they firmly control their feelings and enthusiasm. Typical extroverts are social, affable, and enjoy spending time with people. They easily establish relationships and make many friends, enjoy exciting events, and have only a slight control over their actions and behaviors (Erdoğan, 2006). Van Der Zee, Thijs, and Schakel (2002) analyzed the relationship between emotional intelligence, intelligence and personality. According to their results, there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and two personality factors (extroversion and emotional determination).

According to the present analysis of emotional intelligence in terms of the income level of families, people with low income levels gained lower scores when compared with people who had a high level of income. However, overall, the income level of the families did not have a statistically significant effect. Bircan (2004) found that the emotional intelligence of adolescents was not affected by their socioeconomic status.

The emotional intelligence difference was found to be statistically significant in terms of family description. While there was not any significant difference between the nuclear family and the extended family, the level of emotional intelligence was lower in broken families. Such a situation can have a negative effect, through the separation of parents and the associated problems, on the

emotional intelligence of the youth. It has been reported that an increase in the level of emotional intelligence can raise the life quality in society and decrease the likelihood of divorce and domestic violence (Brockert & Braun, 2000)

While we did not find a significant difference between democratic and protective families in terms of the emotional intelligence score, the difference in neglectful families were significantly negative. The behaviors of parents have important and permanent effects on the emotional lives of their children. Neglectful parents, those who ignore the emotional needs and feelings of their children, negatively affect the personality and the emotional intelligence development of those children. A child whose emotional needs are met in a democratic environment and whose thoughts are respected will trust his/her parents and easily express his/her problems (Erdoğdu, 2008). Children with self-confidence are more successful in human relations. Children can find role models within the family. According to Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler, and Mayer (1999), children learn how to process and organize knowledge and experiences from their role models. Parents who are aware of their own sadness or disappointments and can guide children in anger management have important effects on the organization of the feelings of their children (Hooven, Gottman, & Katz, 1995).

The individual will gain self-awareness, empathy, and ability to manage his/her emotions and relationships (Stein & Book, 2003) and the ability to use this information which will, in turn, reflect on his own feelings and his feelings towards others in the family. This development will continue during the education process. The approaches of family and teachers towards youths are very important. Meeting the social and psychological needs of young people will bring about positive effects. If such needs are met, the young person will easily direct his/her own feelings and control related problems when interacting with other people (Schutte et al., 2001).

In the present study we found that there is a statistically significant difference in levels of emotional intelligence according to age, hometown, self-description, and description of family as well as the attitudes and behaviors of the families towards the individual; however, there is not a significant difference according to gender, alma mater, school graduation degree, and the income level of the family.

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