Emotional intelligence: Theoretical analysis of the conceptual framework

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Copyright. 2021. Psychreg Journal of Psychology
Published by Psychreg Ltd
ISSN: 2515-138X

In this article, a contemporary problem for our current society is approached: emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is currently enjoying great acceptance in society and different fields of activity. Based on the exploitation of scientific literature, this article presents a theoretical analysis according to emotional intelligence. It is realised that the analysis of the morphological genesis of the emotional intelligence concept. This analysis is aimed at the concretisation and configuration of genesis, definition, factors, characteristics, situations of developing emotional intelligence, as well as the main ancestors which collaborated for its development, which will represent a premise for further investigations of this psychological construct and will allow the elaboration and implementation of a training programme oriented towards developing emotional intelligence at pre-teenagers, according to the social situation of development (SSD). The concept of emotional intelligence shows a stronger interest in the last years for researchers, becoming a subject of major scientific interest due to its resemblance with people's success, both personally and professionally; no matter the requirements and tensions of their environment. Addressing this topic is of great importance both nationally and internationally.

Keywords: contemporary problems; emotions; emotional intelligence; field of activity; society

The purpose of presenting the history, definition and presentation of a few concepts and introductory notions of emotional intelligence represents a good approach and even an incentive to operationalise with this vastly studied subject, adding the personal interest in relation to developing emotional intelligence at the preteenager age according to the social situation of development (Bautista et al., 2018). By studying this altruistic problem, we concluded that scientific studies argue that the origin of adults' problems has its roots in childhood, which encourages to focus attention on preteenager age, because 'prepuberty is the beginning of future orientation,' (Crețu, 2011, p. 292). Prepuberty represents one of the most challenging periods of development. It is a period of the emotional and intellectual resemblance of the personality, described as an unpleasant period, difficult for the preteenagers and the ones in contact with them. The preteenager life is illustrated by the environmental influence they grow (family, community, and society). Emotional quotient (EQ) development is a natural imperative of the preteenager and a natural acquisition, permanently oriented toward correct solving issues imposed by the exterior world. In the absence of EQ development, and antisocial deviation will intervene in the wrong way on which the preteenager is in this period subject to temptation.

Over the years, specific visions and perspectives of understanding emotional intelligence were outlined. This raised multiple approaches both in theory and practice. Researchers in the emotional intelligence domain has created a succession of patterns that expose the basis and determine emotional intelligence factors. This paper, therefore, sets out to analyse the historical evolution of the concept to present a theoretical analysis of the conceptual framework of emotional intelligence. It has been concluded that the vast majority of research, regardless of issuing the concept and detailing its components, consider that emotional intelligence is based on emotion identification and understanding, emotional control, and interpersonal relationships management. The term 'emotional intelligence' suggests that there are other ways of being intelligent rather than the ones presented by standard intelligence tests, that an individual can develop these abilities and that they can have good mental and physical health, a positive vision over life, positive social interactions, an ideal functioning of familial relations, success in professional relationships, becoming a leader in further activity (Relojo, 2018). Etymologically, the concept of intelligence comes from the Latin 'intelligere', which means to have relationships, to organise or from 'interfere', which entails establishing human relationships.

Within the Romanian context, this term is defined as 'the capacity to understand phenomena, facts, events easily, to notice the essential relations between things, to solve new problems using previous experience; the set of mental functions through which conceptual and rational knowledge is realised; cleverness, ingenuity' or 'the ability to adapt in a situation, to choose concerning circumstances, to make sense of a thing etc.' (Dicționarul explicativ ilustrat al Limbii Romane, p. 918).

Intelligence represents a complex term with multiple analysis, interpretations, paradigms. It can be seen as a personality function, as an individual skill, to react to a social situation (Santos & Relojo-Howell, 2020). There are two types of elements intelligence contains cognitive elements (intellectual factors) and non-cognitive elements (social, emotional, and personal factors). Intelligence is a complete 'uniform' of mental abilities (Acharya & Relojo, 2017). Emotional intelligence represents the ability to recognise, generate and access emotions, assist your thoughts, understand emotions and emotional information, and control your emotions and promote intellectual and emotional development (Mayer et al., 2004). Emotional intelligence has its roots in the concept of 'social intelligence', being for the first time identified by Edward Thorndike, at the end of 30s, which defined this concept as: 'Social intelligence represents the capacity to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls, to act wisely in interpersonal relationships' (Thorndike & Stein, 1937, p. 275); in other words, to be capable of getting along with a variety of people and react wisely in human relations. Since 1940, David Weschler suggests that there are effective components of intelligence, which can be essential in succeeding in life, that 'the adaptation of the individual in their living environment is achieved both through cognitive elements and non-cognitive ones' (Frățilă, 1998, p. 276). A stimulating environment that assures emotional support leads to the full intellectual development of individuals (Birch, et al., 2000; Relojo-Howell, 2019). David Wechsler defines intelligence: 'The global capacity of the individual to act in order to achieve a goal, to think rationally and to adapt to their living environment efficiently' (Rotaru, 2016). Meanwhile, R. W. Leeper, an American researcher, promoted in 1948 the idea of 'emotional thought', which was thought to contribute to 'logical thought'. In 1955, Albert Ellis started to examine what would next become 'rational, emotional therapy'. 'This therapy proposed that people would learn to control their emotions logically (Pilao et al., 2017). In 1950, Abraham Maslow, an American humanist psychologist, describes how people can build emotional connections starting from human needs, love and association, friendship, family, respect, etc. He describes how people organise their relationships and build emotional connections, pointing out that the appeal to emotions represents a basic component in influencing and forming attitudes towards people' (Goleman, 2007, p. 376).

Meanwhile, Maslow (1981, p. 348), in his book *Motivation and Personality*, suggests that 'emotional self-awareness has an important role in developing a healthy personality, arguing that there is no motivation and perseverance without emotions'. In 1975, Howard Gardner used the concept of 'multiple intelligences' in the paper *The Shattered Mind*, arguing that there is not only one type of intelligence but more. According to Gardner's theory about multiple intelligences, humans have multiple ways of processing information, and these ways are co-dependent. Gardner's theory regarding multiple intelligences can be seen as a starting point and a continuation of last century's work on human intelligence. Gardner identified seven types of intelligence: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, kinaesthetic, as well as interpersonal intelligence, with regards to the capacity of evaluating others' states of mind, to understand them, to know what motivates and makes people cooperate. Interpersonal intelligence, consisting of the ability to correctly see one's person, a good self-evaluation, self-judgement and emotional adjustment (Bukowski et al., 1993). The two types of intelligence, intrapersonal and interpersonal, combined represent what we know today as emotional intelligence. The first who used the term 'emotional intelligence' was Wayne Leon Payne, in 1985, in his paper 'A study of emotion: Developing emotional intelligence; self-integration; relating to fear; pain and desire'. The term 'emotional intelligence' was used in a wide area, proving that emotional awareness is a defining component of children's development. The author clarifies for the first time the concept of emotional intelligence as a part of general intelligence, but also as its concept. As a result, the first definition appears: 'Emotional intelligence is an ability which implies a creative liaison with feelings of anxiety, pain and desire' (Mayer et al., 2004, p. 139). In 1990, two American professors, Peter Salovey and John Mayer, published articles in the academic journal *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*. Mayer and Salovey are generally seen as the founders of emotional intelligence. They coordinated the research regarding emotional intelligence, which set the direction in this domain and the ones that own the model of emotional intelligence capabilities. For them, emotional intelligence combines feelings with thinking and thinking with feelings (Kuha et al., 2018; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). They discovered that some people are more skilled at identifying their feelings, of others' feelings and determining emotional problems, being of the opinion that emotional intelligence entails perceiving and expressing emotions in the fairest manner. Thus, emotional intelligence is defined as a 'form of intelligence that implies the ability to observe feelings, their own emotions, and others', facilitating the discrimination between these and using the information to control some situations or actions'. Through this definition, the authors wanted to highlight the positive inter-conditions between emotion and thinking. Together, they have developed The Mayer-Salovey Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), as well as an innovative system of emotional intelligence named 'Systems Framework for Personality Psychology' (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p.189).

The interest in studying emotional intelligence is also seen at Albert Mehrabian (1993), known for his research in various communication psychology and educational sciences. In his opinion, emotions represent an efficient form of communication. Their power of influencing the way we attract or are attracted by others, getting closer to each other, earning or losing trust, fighting and making up should not be underestimated. Mehrabian believes that a high level of EQ is always associated with the existence of solid relationships with others, on whom we can count when dealing with issues that involve their cooperation (family, work, teamwork, etc.) (Plandeafacere, 2008).

While Salovey and Mayer created the term 'emotional intelligence', Daniel Goleman, a writer from New York, published the book *Emotional Intelligence*, which became an international bestseller. He spread the term through his work and books at the beginning of 1995. Goleman's work introduced millions of people to the idea and concept of emotional intelligence. In this book, the author puts together the existing theories with respect to a different kind of intelligence, aside from the pure rational one of type Q1 and explains its characteristics and importance in great detail. His name is most often associated with the term 'emotional intelligence'. Starting with this year, emotional intelligence has become one of the most disputed subjects. It has grown worldwide after the publication of this book. In his book, Daniel Goleman presents references that rose interest in relation to the brain, emotions, and behaviour (Pinto-Coelho & Relojo, 2017). The writer's contribution was to gather previous research and transform them into an intelligible and attractive manner. By combining his research with the ones of other researchers in the area, Goleman specifies in the book that there are two brains or two minds: the rational and the emotional one. Likewise, he mentions that emotional intelligence drives the individual capacity to assimilate basic utilitarian skills through five components: self-knowledge, self-motivation, self-control, social conscience, and social abilities. According to him, emotional intelligence designates a control and self-control capacity of stress and negative emotions, a meta-ability, which determines and influences the efficiency with which we can use our other capacities and abilities, which we own, including educational intelligence. Goleman defines emotional intelligence as 'the capacity to recognise our own and others' emotions in order to motivate ourselves, to control our emotions our relationships with others' (Goleman, 2007, p. 376).

Daniel Goleman enumerates the active components of prevention programmes, namely (Consortium W. T. Grant), The Programme of Self Science, as follows: Active components of the prevention programs (Consortium W. T. Grant): (1) Emotional capacities (identification and labelling feelings, expressing feelings, the evaluation of feelings' intensity, control, postponement of reward, urges control, stress reduction, understanding the difference between feelings and actions); (2) Cognitive capacities (talks with ourselves, reading and interpretation of social signals (Relojo et al., 2016) using steps in problem-solving, understanding different perspective, understanding behaviour norms, a positive attitude with regards to life, self-awareness); and (3) Behavioural capacities, which encompass non-verbal and verbal. Whereas Self-Sciences Programme has its main components: Self-awareness, making personal decisions, feelings management, stress management, empathy, communication, self-disclosure, perspective, self-acceptance, personal liability, affirmation, group dynamic, conflict resolution.

Theoretically and practically, Goleman's book, which travelled the world, tried to place this concept of 'emotional intelligence in relation to the education system, especially with success in contemporary society. In other words, emotions can become a helpful instrument in guiding our choices and decisions which we make, and any person can raise their intelligence degree through education and exercises. Carolyn Saarni, the developmental psychologist, is considered a pillar in the emotional intelligence domain and known for the revolutionary development in relation to the development of emotional intelligence and emotional management in children. While Daniel Goleman was dedicating his time to his research on mediation, Carolyn Saarni performed important work in emotions, outlining the important socialising role. In 1999, she published the paper 'Developing emotional competence', where she describes emotional competence as including eight factors: emotional self-awareness, the ability to understand others' emotions, the ability to use the vocabulary of emotion and expression, empathic involvement, the ability to differentiate the subjective emotional experience from external emotion expression, to adapt to aversive emotions and painful circumstances, being aware of emotional communication concerning relationships and the capacity of emotional self-efficacy (Saarni, 2019). Meanwhile, Hein (1996) defines emotional intelligence by making use of some concepts which support the idea of being aware of your and other feelings, as well as knowing how to act, to see the difference between what is good for you and bad, and how to move from bad to good, to have emotional awareness, sensitivity and leading capacity which helps to maximise your happiness and survival long-term. He considers that emotional intelligence represents our innate potential (Caleb & Relojo-Howell, 2019). The potential of being intelligent has four components: emotional sensitivity, memory sensitivity, processing information and learning (Boltivets & Relojo, 2019). Hein believes that to form, develop, and train emotional intelligence. 'We need to go through several stages: identifying our own emotions, taking responsibility for them, understanding compassion and empathy, and applying them in our day-to-day life,' (Fodor, 2009, p. 64; Relojo & Gagani, 2016). Another name in the area of emotional intelligence is David Carusso. He has continued the research started by Salovey and Mayer. On the same side, Carusso suggests that QE is the proper form of intelligence.

Bar-On, the doctor at Tel Aviv University, was involved in the conceptualisation, research and application of emotional intelligence since 1980, and he is known as one of the most influential theorists, researchers and practicians in this area. Bar-On defines emotional intelligence as being: 'a set of capacities, competencies, and non-cognitive abilities that influence a person's ability to cope successfully to the general needs and pressures arising from adapting to the environment' (Plandeafacere, 2008). He introduced the term 'EQ' (emotional quotient') in 1985 in order to describe his approach in evaluating emotional and social intelligence. The Bar-On model defines the notion of 'emotional-social intelligence", ' describing a series of emotional, social and personality traits that are co-dependent and well established, interacting together on the individual to overstep the daily demands. Bar-On developed the first available commercial instrument to measure emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 1997). While he elaborated on other measuring instruments (interviews, quizzes and other versions of these instruments). When it comes to research, the most used test is the Emotional Inventory of the coefficient (Bar-On, 1997), an emotional intelligence test that contains 133 short sentences. His studies (since 1980) are one of the most significant achievements in the area of emotional intelligence. His interest in this domain was triggered by a series of basic questions: 'Why do some people have a better state of mind? Why some people succeed easier in life? Why people with superior intellectual capacities appear not to obtain their wanted success, while others, less gifted, succeed better?' (Stein & Book, 2011, p.2). As a result, R. Bar-On defined it as a 'range of non-cognitive skills, competence and qualities, which can influence one's capacity to cope with pressures and demands of the environment' (Stein & Book, 2011, p.14). Reuven Bar-On identified five factors that determine intelligence: intrapersonal aspect, interpersonal aspect, adaptability, stress control and disposition. He created the emotional coefficient (EQ), declaring that a person with a high score of the coefficient reaches success in life.

Segal presented a few opinions related to emotions in his book, *Developing Emotional Intelligence*, which can be appreciated as 'preconceived ideas with regards to emotional intelligence'. He affirms that emotions are inferior to rationality, dangerous, harmful and helpful emotions, that self-control comes from repressing emotions, arguing that 'self-control does not come from controlling emotions, but through living them', and that 'emotions darken our judgement' (Segal, 2000, p.29–30). In 1935, the American psychologist Edgar Doll published his first instrument to measure intelligent social behaviour in young children. He elaborated the social maturity scale of Vineland in order to measure social competence. Segal (2000) outlined four components of emotional intelligence: (1) emotional consciousness – an authentic experience of all emotions; (2) acceptance – which refers to accepting conscious emotions/assuming responsibility for our emotional states; (3) active emotional awareness – living in the present, not the past; and (4) empathy – our answer for others' feelings and wants without giving away our own emotional experience (Roco, 2004). Stein and Book define emotional intelligence as a set of skills that allows the person to cope in a complex world. Rationality is supported by analysis which proved that for good cognitive intelligence and in order to adapt it, we need, first of all, good emotional intelligence. Why? 'Because no matter how smart we are, if we push others through aggressive behaviour, if we do not pay attention to the way we introduce ourselves and do not have enough stress resistance, no one will be around us to see our high IQ' (Stein & Book, 2011, p.5). Floyd (2011) gives another definition of emotional intelligence in *Interpersonal Communication*, which is classified as one's competence to understand and express emotions appropriately and use them to favour thinking and emotion management for developing emotional intelligence. John Gottman (American researcher and psychologist) has devoted almost 20 years to studying children's psychologic development domain and emotional life. In his research regarding the relationship between child and parent and emotional development, it is shown that: 'children will be more successful and happier in life, regardless of their IQ, through emotional awareness and capacity of controlling and managing emotions' (Gottman, 2018). He analyses a system of five steps to train emotions: (1) Be aware of your child's emotions; (2) See your child's emotions as an opportunity to teach or connect; (3) Help your child to name his emotions verbally; (4) Communicate empathy and understanding; and (5) Set boundaries while helping your child to solve their issues.

In Romania, there are people known for their research in the emotional intelligence domain. Thereby, Mihaela Roco has manifested a special curiosity for educating and perfecting emotional intelligence. In the book *Creativity and Emotional Intelligence*, she reminds that Goleman, in 1998 was saying that: 'In contrast with the degree of intelligence, which stays consistent during the entire life or the personality which does not change, competencies relying on emotional intelligence are learnt abilities' (Roco, 2004, p. 142). In her opinion, emotional intelligence plays an important role in professional adaptability and ensures efficient management, leadership, and interpersonal relationships control. She presents a number of principles of using emotional intelligence for better cooperation and communication at the workplace. Roco sees more directions of education and improvement of emotional intelligence in the school and familial environment. Iulia Fodor, the author of the book *Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Styles*, signals the importance of emotional intelligence in a leadership activity. Iulia Fodor affirms that 'emotional intelligence is an ability that is not dispensable' (Fodor, 2009, p. 76).

Generally, emotional intelligence refers to a set of the emotional and social set of competencies through which a person can put together both cognitive abilities (intellectual) such as attention, memory, problem-solving, making decisions, as well as his social goals, which depend on abilities like empathy, rule compliance, maintaining satisfying social relations, prosocial behaviours, etc. (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The lessons of a social group leave their mark on the manner of affirmation and expression of its members, regarding 'the way an individual sees, understands and evaluates what is happening at a social level, and this depends on his own beliefs, and individual goals acquired' (Lazarus, 2011, p. 482). We can say that adjusting the individual in an environment also happens through emotional aspects, personal and social, which are crucial for personal success, not only through cognitive behaviours. Emotional intelligence characterises our way of being, how we understand and express ourselves, the way we evolve and record social relations, our coping mechanism, and make sense of life. Our competence in this domain can continue to grow, for which there is a popular saying: growing up. At present, emotional intelligence can be seen as a considerable element of interdependency between feelings, character and ethical senses. The current research line is focusing on establishing the utility of this new construction in a number of essential domains to prove how EQ determines our behaviour and what areas of life are most influenced by it. How quickly emotional intelligence has become such an important topic in a wide range of domains develops efficient predictions, but difficult, and current research regarding defining emotional intelligence remains a wide analysis and a controversial debate for professionals in diverse areas.

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