

**THE ISSUE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF
VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE OF STUDENTS**

***A QUESTÃO DA INTELIGÊNCIA EMOCIONAL NO CONTEXTO DA ORIENTAÇÃO
PROFISSIONAL DE ESTUDANTES***

***EL TEMA DE LA INTELIGENCIA EMOCIONAL EN EL CONTEXTO DE LA
ORIENTACIÓN PROFESIONAL DE LOS ESTUDIANTES***

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ABSTRACT: Communicative competence acts as a universal competence that is an important factor in the professionalism and competitiveness of university graduates in the labor market. This applies to all areas of professional activity, but it acquires particular importance in the service sector due to the direct interaction of specialists with clients. A study was carried out in three Russian universities with a total of 212 students. The results of the study on the individual components of emotional intelligence showed that the greatest difficulties for all students are caused by the management of their own emotions. According to the results of the study, conclusions were drawn about the need for psychological testing of applicants to determine the preferred types of professional activity and to strengthen the emphasis of educational and educative work on the formation of skills to manage their own emotions.

KEYWORDS: Professional orientation. Emotional awareness. Empathy. Self-motivation. Management of emotions.

RESUMO: *A competência comunicativa atua como uma competência universal que é um fator importante no profissionalismo e competitividade dos graduados universitários no mercado de trabalho. Isto aplica-se a todas as áreas de atividade profissional, mas adquire particular importância no setor dos serviços devido à interação direta dos especialistas com os clientes. Um estudo foi realizado em três universidades russas com um total de 212 alunos. Os resultados do estudo sobre os componentes individuais da inteligência emocional*

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mostraram que as maiores dificuldades para todos os alunos são causadas pelo gerenciamento de suas próprias emoções. De acordo com os resultados do estudo, foram tiradas conclusões sobre a necessidade de testes psicológicos aos candidatos para determinar os tipos de atividade profissional preferidos e reforçar a ênfase do trabalho educativo e educativo na formação de competências para gerir as próprias emoções.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Orientação profissional. Consciência emocional. Empatia. Automotivação. Gestão das emoções.*

RESUMEN: *La competencia comunicativa actúa como una competencia universal que es un factor importante en la profesionalización y competitividad de los titulados universitarios en el mercado laboral. Esto se aplica a todas las áreas de la actividad profesional, pero adquiere especial importancia en el sector servicios debido a la interacción directa de los especialistas con los clientes. Se llevó a cabo un estudio en tres universidades rusas con un total de 212 estudiantes. Los resultados del estudio sobre los componentes individuales de la inteligencia emocional mostraron que las mayores dificultades para todos los alumnos están provocadas por la gestión de sus propias emociones. De acuerdo con los resultados del estudio, se extrajeron conclusiones sobre la necesidad de realizar pruebas psicológicas a los aspirantes a fin de determinar los tipos de actividad profesional preferidos y fortalecer el énfasis del trabajo educativo y educativo en la formación de habilidades para gestionar sus propias emociones.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Orientación profesional. Conciencia emocional. Empatia. Automotivación. Gestión de emociones.*

Introduction

One of the universal competencies spelled out in modern Russian higher education standards is communicative competence. The importance of this competence both in terms of personal self-development and in terms of professional development of students is beyond doubt. Considering this issue from the standpoint of the competitiveness of university graduates in the labor market, it should be recognized that the factor of communicative competence acquires particular importance in those areas of professional activity that are distinguished by the type of "person - person", due to the large component of interaction in the structure of labor functions (PASTUKHOVA; GRUDISTOVA, 2018).

Emotions play an important role in any interaction. Both excessive emotionality and excessive emotional restraint make communication difficult. In addition to managing their own emotions, professionals working with people must also have the skills to recognize and manage the emotions of others. Considering this problem comprehensively, we are forced to turn to the concept of emotional intelligence. Today, this side of intelligence attracts attention of many domestic and foreign researchers. When considering this problem from the

standpoint of higher education, the issue of students' choice of their future occupation from the point of view of the requirements put forward by this profession to the level of development of emotional intelligence acquires particular relevance (GRUDISTOVA *et al.*, 2019; MONINA, 2011; SLINKOVA *et al.*, 2015; SLINKOVA; SLINKOV; PASTUKHOVA, 2017).

It is generally considered that the term "emotional intelligence" was introduced into scientific circulation by the Israeli psychologist R. Bar-On (1997), who suggested using the emotionality quotient (EQ) by analogy with the intelligence quotient (IQ) to assess a person's capabilities in the emotional sphere. One of the most famous concepts of emotional intelligence belongs to P. Salovey and J. Mayer (1990). The authors identify four main components of emotional intelligence:

- 1) the ability to perceive emotions;
- 2) the ability to use emotions to improve and speed up mental performance;
- 3) the ability to understand emotions;
- 4) the ability to manage own emotions and the emotions of others.

Another concept of emotional intelligence belongs to D. Goleman and gained high popularity in Russia thanks to the translation of his eponymous book into Russian. Strictly speaking, this book does not contain a scientifically clear presentation of the concept of emotional intelligence itself, which does not diminish its scientific value, since the author relies on rich factual material and the results of serious research in his conclusions. Consideration of emotional intelligence by D. Goleman is in fact very close to the concept of P. Salovey and J. Mayer, however, it is important, in our opinion, to highlight such additional components of emotional intelligence as the ability to empathize and self-motivation. This directly "follows" from the very definition that D. Goleman (2009) gives emotional intelligence, which, in his opinion, represents such abilities as the ability to develop motivation for oneself and persistently strive to achieve a goal despite failures, to restrain impulses and to postpone getting satisfaction, to control one's moods and not to let suffering deprive oneself of the ability to think, empathize and hope (p. 61).

Even though the concept of emotional intelligence is entirely attributed to foreign researchers, we note that the outstanding Russian psychologist L. S. Vygotsky pointed out long before the concept's appearance that the processes of thinking are subject to affective (emotional) regulation (LEONTIEV, 1967, p. 21). His research convincingly confirms the existence of a connection between the emotional state of a person and the results of his mental activity.

Subsequently, many domestic and foreign scientists have turned to the consideration of emotional intelligence and, based on research, have come to important conclusions (ANDREEVA, 2011; CIARROCHI; DEAN; ANDERSON, 2002; GARNER, 2010; KARPOV; PETROVSKYA, 2008; LAU, 2005; LYUSIN; USHAKOV, 2009):

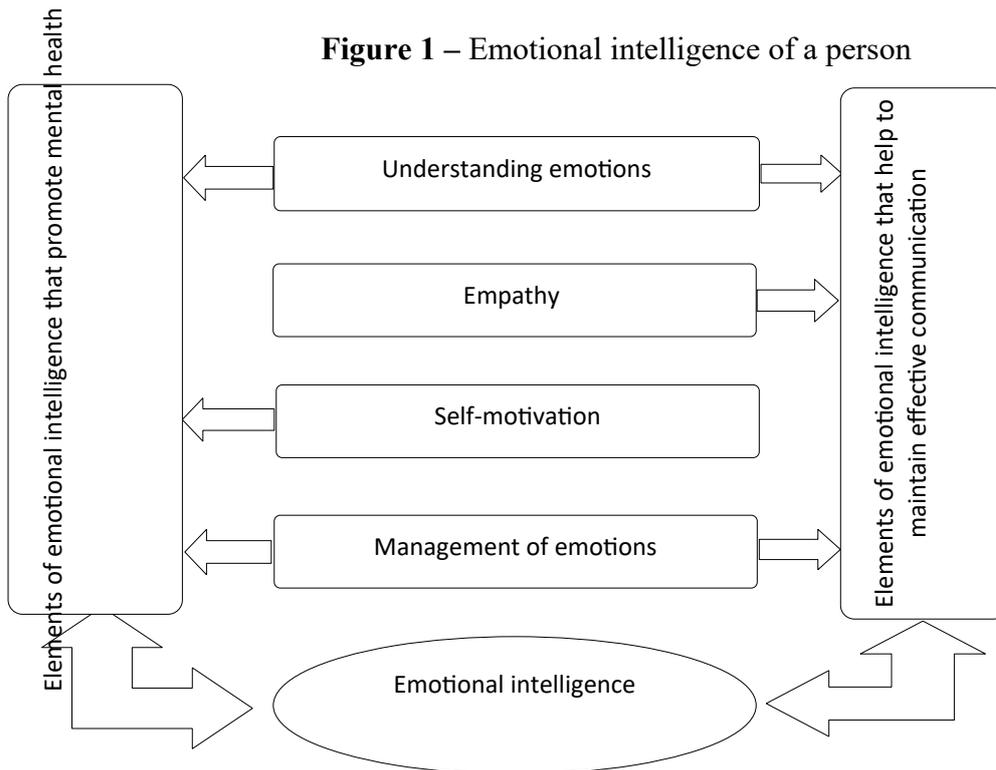
- 1) developed emotional intelligence helps to maintain mental health and increase stress resistance;
- 2) developed emotional intelligence increases the efficiency of interaction;
- 3) developed emotional intelligence contributes to an increase in the efficiency of professional activity, especially in those spheres of human activity that belong to the "person - person" type;
- 4) emotional intelligence can be developed.

The purpose of the study is to identify the relationship between the level of development of emotional intelligence and professional orientation of students. In realizing this goal, we proceeded from the premise that the highest requirements for the level of development of emotional intelligence are imposed in the spheres of professional activity related to the "person - person" type. This work is a continuation of the complex of studies carried out by the authors on the problem of professional and personal development of students in the process of university education.

Materials and methods

The analysis of scientific approaches to the consideration of emotional intelligence allowed us to form a model of emotional intelligence, which serves as a methodological basis for conducting research, is presented in the Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Emotional intelligence of a person



Source: Devised by the authors

Commenting on the presented model of the emotional intelligence of a person, we note the following. Emotional intelligence is a combination of two principles closely interconnected. These are the abilities associated with the ability to regulate own emotions, allowing a person to maintain his or her mental health, and the ability to regulate the emotions of other people, ensuring effective interaction with other people. In this sense, all components of the emotional intelligence of a person can be divided into three groups:

- 1) elements of emotional intelligence that are personality-oriented;
- 2) elements of emotional intelligence that are socially oriented;
- 3) elements of emotional intelligence, which are of a complex nature, contributing to both the provision of personal mental stability and the success of a person's social life.

Of course, this division of the components of emotional intelligence is rather arbitrary, it is notably difficult to draw clear boundaries here, so we proceeded from the assessed priority of their impact on the sphere of the mental or social life of an individual. Let us give a brief description of the elements of emotional intelligence we have identified and outline the ways of their development.

Understanding emotions. Emotions carry information about our own mental state and the state of other people. It is very important to recognize these conditions in a timely manner, to identify them. This ability also presupposes an understanding of the causes of the

appearance of emotions in specific situations, an understanding of possible behavioral reactions and their consequences, the ability to correctly describe emotions in situations of interaction. Understanding your own emotions, as it might seem, should not cause any special difficulties: it seems natural that a person understands what he or she is feeling. In fact, we do not always analyze our feelings. Experiencing emotional stress, a person does not always ask the question: “what exactly do I feel (resentment, anger, envy, dislike, fear, helplessness, etc.)?”, or, sometimes deliberately avoids this question if, for example, he or she does not want to admit that their experiences are due to envy. Introspection, that is, deep immersion in one's own "I", as well as attentive and honest attitude to our feelings contributes to the development of perception and understanding of our own emotions.

Familiarity with non-verbal language helps to facilitate understanding of other people's emotions. This is, first of all, the ability to "read" a person's emotions by his or her facial expressions. It is not for nothing that is often said: "you have got all on your face", thereby emphasizing the connection between various emotional states of a person and a change in his or her facial expressions. Gestures and postures also carry a lot of information about a person's condition. So, for example, experiencing a feeling of anger, a person involuntarily clenches his fists, and a person experiencing distrust often mechanically touches his forehead, temples, and chin with his hands. For specialists working in the fields of “person - person” activities, understanding the emotions of clients is of particular importance, since the correct identification of the emotions allows the specialists to correctly respond to various manifestations of emotions by clients and build the most effective strategy for communicating with them.

Empathy. This component of emotional intelligence characterizes a person's ability to recognize the right of others to express their feelings, to be attentive to the feelings of others and provide them with moral support. A necessary condition for the manifestation of this ability is developed empathy. The opposite of empathy is antipathy. However, the lack of participation in a person's experiences is not always determined by his rejection, antipathy. Much more often this comes from inner callousness, focusing on one's own emotions and experiences. Lack of empathy is always the result of inattention to a person, lack of a sincere, interested attitude towards him or her. Empathy is not so much the work of the mind as the work of the soul and heart. Therefore, attempts to formulate strict rules for the development of empathy are unproductive. The main conditions for the development of empathy are the ability to listen, the ability to look at the situation through the eyes of another person and, most importantly, sincere love and interest in people.

Self-motivation. Motivation is often talked about when managing other people is considered. It is no coincidence that the term "motivation" is one of the most popular in management. Speaking of self-motivation, we mean that internal energy that moves a person, directs his or her mind and actions. Unfortunately, this internal energy is not constant. A lot of life situations, perceived by us as crises, can suppress this energy and putting us into a state where we do not want anything, joy and even the meaning of life are lost. Keeping yourself motivated and rescuing yourself from depression is an important part of emotional intelligence. The ability to maintain and develop one's own motivation prevents emotional burnout, strengthens the body's resistance to stress, and makes a person's life more fulfilling and vibrant.

Emotion management. This ability is manifested in the ability to evoke desirable or prevent unwanted emotions, increase or decrease their manifestation and is related to one's own emotions and to the emotions of other people. For those working in the "person - person" system, this ability, firstly, allows to increase stress resistance and, secondly, to ensure the achievement of positive results of interaction with clients.

Of the tools for assessing emotional intelligence proposed by various researchers, we adopted the test of the American scientist N. Hall as the most appropriate to this requirement. This test uses five scales to assess emotional intelligence:

- emotional awareness;
- managing own emotions;
- self-motivation;
- empathy;
- management of others' emotions.

The sample consisted of 212 students from Moscow State Regional University, Belgorod State National Research University and Bratsk State University. To conduct a comparative analysis, we have chosen four areas of training corresponding to the spheres of professional activity "person - person": Pedagogical education (PE), Personnel management (PM), Service and Tourism; one study program related to the type of "person - technology": Industrial and Civil Construction (ICC); one study program of the type "person - sign system": Applied Informatics in Economics (AIE).

Results and discussion

The research results obtained for the sample as a whole are presented in Table 1

Table 1 – Levels of emotional intelligence

Scale	Result, points						
	In the sample as a whole	PE	PM	Service	Tourism	ICC	AIE
1. Emotional awareness	10.7	9.9	12.6	11.3	12.7	15.5	7.6
2. Management of own emotions	2.1	0.2	1.6	2.7	0.3	5.8	1.5
3. Self-motivation	7.4	5.7	8.0	9.2	8.7	8.5	6.6
4. Empathy	9.7	9.7	10.9	9.1	10.7	12.8	7.5
5. Management of others' emotions	8.9	8.0	8.9	9.1	11.5	11.3	7.4
Level of emotional intelligence	38.8	33.5	42.0	41.4	43.9	53.9	30.6

Source: Devised by the authors

Before commenting on the data presented in Table 1, let us explain the measurement system adopted in the test. In accordance with the methodology used, the result of the assessment is expressed in points, which can have both positive and negative values. At the same time, the following system is used to interpret the results of assessing emotional intelligence according to individual scales:

less than 8 points - a low level of development of emotional intelligence according to the corresponding scale;

8-14 points - average level;

14 and above is a high level.

The following system is used to interpret the results of the integral assessment of emotional intelligence:

less than 40 points - a low level of development of emotional intelligence;

40-70 points - average level;

70 and above is a high level.

Let us turn to the consideration of the data obtained as a result of the research. In general, for the sample of students, the level of development of emotional intelligence turned

out to be low (38.8 points), although close to the value, starting from which it is assessed as average (40 points). Note that the greatest “contribution” to such results was made by the assessment of emotional intelligence on the scale “managing your emotions”. On this scale, the lowest level of marks in all areas of training was recorded (2.1 points in general for the sample with a spread of values from 0.2 points among students studying in the field of training Pedagogical education to 5.8 points among students studying in the area of training Industrial and civil construction). As for the integral assessment of the level of development of emotional intelligence, here the obtained picture corresponds to the previous one: the highest level was noted among students of the Industrial and Civil Engineering direction (53.9 points), and the lowest - among future teachers (33.5 points). It seems that everything should be exactly the opposite, since the first direction corresponds to the type of professional activity "person - person", and the second - "person - technology", but our study did not confirm this seemingly simple logic. Of course, this raises a big question mark regarding the criteria used by applicants (and their parents) for choosing a future professional activity.

A more detailed comparison of the research results on various scales for assessing emotional intelligence allows us to come to the following conclusions. On the scale of "Emotional awareness", the maximum value corresponding to a high level of development (15.5 points) was noted among students of the industrial and civil construction direction. This is the only indicator that turned out to be at a high level. The lowest value on this scale was recorded among students of the Applied Informatics in Economics direction (7.6 points). In other areas of training, this indicator turned out to be at an average level (from 9.9 points in Pedagogical education to 12.7 points in Tourism study program).

On the “Self-motivation” scale, the highest indicator (9.2 points) was noted among students enrolled in Service, and the lowest among future teachers (5.7 points), while in two areas of training (Applied Informatics in Economics and Pedagogical education), the points obtained correspond to a low level, and for the rest - to an average level.

Emotional intelligence on the "Empathy" scale in all areas of training except for Applied Informatics in Economics (7.5 points) was at the average level of development, with the maximum value in Industrial and Civil Construction (12.8 points).

A similar picture was revealed on the scale of “Management of others' emotions”. Moreover, the highest value of this indicator was noted in the Tourism students (11.5 points).

Summarizing the results of our comparative study in various areas of training, we note the following. In the areas of training Industrial and Civil Construction, Personnel Management, Service and Tourism, emotional intelligence corresponds to the average level of

development (53.9, 42.0, 41.4 and 43.9 points, respectively). In the areas of training Applied Informatics in Economics and Pedagogical Education, a low level of development of emotional intelligence was noted (30.6 and 33.5 points, respectively). As for the first direction, such a result seems to be quite expected. This direction corresponds to the type of professional activity "person - sign system". People working in this field are often called digitals. Digital people tend to have high analytical skills, however, the emotional sphere often suffers. Regarding the Pedagogical Education students, the results of the study are deeply concerning.

Another aspect of this study which is of interest is related to the gender characteristics of the manifestation of emotional intelligence (Table 2).

Table 2 – Levels of emotional intelligence: gender aspect

Scale	Result, points	
	men	women
1. Emotional awareness	9.3	11.6
2. Management of own emotions	3.7	0.6
3. Self-motivation	8.3	7.1
4. Empathy	8.5	11.1
5. Management of others' emotions	7.7	9.2
Level of emotional intelligence	37.5	39.6

Source: Devised by the authors

The results of this study show a slightly higher level of emotional intelligence in women (39.6 points), in men it was 37.5 points. These results generally correspond to the accepted in scientific circles ideas about the gender structure of emotional intelligence. The assessments of the level of development of the emotional intelligence of women exceed the corresponding values identified in men, according to the scales: "Emotional awareness", "Empathy" and "Management of others' emotions". On the scales "Management of own emotions" and "Self-motivation", the results of the men were higher than those of the women. This, too, does not contradict the dominant views of today.

Conclusion

The conducted research allowed us to come to the following main conclusions. First, our assumption that applicants who choose areas of training focused on the spheres of professional activity distinguished by the type of "person - person" have a more developed emotional intelligence, was only partially confirmed. Of the four such areas of training chosen by us for the study, in three (Personnel Management, Service and Tourism), students showed an average level of development of emotional intelligence. This level, obviously, is acceptable, but still does not fully meet the modern requirements of customer focus. As for the Pedagogical education study program, the low level of emotional intelligence of students which was revealed in the course of the study is a rather serious problem for future teachers. As one of the options for solving this problem, we see a wider involvement of applicants in psychological testing to identify preferred areas of professional activity.

Secondly, almost all students experience the greatest difficulties in terms of such a component of emotional intelligence as the ability to control their own emotions. It should be noted that modern life, characterized by high dynamism and the presence of a large number of factors that cause stress, requires an attentive attitude of educators to this problem. This problem, in our opinion, can be solved within the framework of educational and social-educational activities carried out in universities (including the institution of supervision). The development of students' emotional intelligence during the educational process can be carried out through:

- 1) strengthening the section "Emotions" within the course of general psychology;
- 2) introduction of author's courses that in-depth consider the problems of the development of emotional intelligence;
- 3) using of active methods and collective forms of students' work in the classroom, providing for discussion elements.

The development of students' emotional intelligence within the framework of social and educational activities at the university has unlimited possibilities in terms of using various methods and forms of work with students. In the course of such work, special attention should be paid to the following provisions, which are of fundamental importance for the development of emotional intelligence:

- 1) any emotions, regardless of whether they carry positive or negative experiences, are given to a person as a kind of natural mechanism that allows one to relieve excessive

psychological stress, therefore, driving emotions deep into the depths without giving a way out is the most unreasonable thing a person can do;

2) each person is responsible for his or her own feelings. One does not have to attribute the blame for one's feelings to others. Usually, people do not seek to deliberately offend or upset someone (this, of course, also happens, but extremely rarely and usually as a response);

3) everyone has the right to openly express their feelings and be listened to;

4) the correct expression of one's own feelings excludes the use of criticism, the desire to accuse someone or impose any actions on him;

5) if the verbal expression of feelings for some reason is impossible, it should be done mentally and unnecessary stress could be relieved through physical activity aimed at solving important matters: violent emotions indicate the need for change.

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