

## Emotional Intelligence as a Factor of Adaptation Potential of Personality

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**Abstract:** Dynamism and originality of the processes occurring in society being the most distinctive features of modern Russian reality, determine the new nature of requirements for professional activity and hence for specialist training system. Young people tend in the current context to self-expression and comfort, realizing the need for the formation of purposeful activity and possibility to be well versed in the professional world. General psychological competence of the expert becomes a significant component of his professional success, ensuring his competitiveness. Purpose of this study is to identify the role of emotional intelligence in the process of adaptation of a person to exquisite situations serving as a traumatic factor that ensures personal psychological stability. This study deals with emotional intelligence as a complex personal construct that ensures both adaptation of a person to the changing social conditions and its psychological stability. We have studied the relations between emotional intelligence and coping behavior of personality. We have demonstrated empirical studies on the relations between the ratio of emotional intelligence component structure and structure of the individual coping strategies with an example of students of the humanitarian department. The created diagnostic system helps to reveal aspects of development and the level of severity of personal emotional intelligence as well as to have intentional effect on the development of main components of the integral characteristics, providing thereby psychological support to the readiness of a student's personality for self-fulfillment.

**Key words:** Emotional intelligence, coping behavior of personality, psychological stability of personality, readiness for self-fulfillment, determine

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### INTRODUCTION

Social and economic reforms implemented in our country result in provoking the natural competition of young professionals on the labor market. General psychological competence of the expert becomes a significant component of his professional success, ensuring his competitiveness.

High professionalism and creative skills in its implementation by different experts is the principal human resource which becomes an important factor in bringing optimal solution to the current globally critical problems. It is particularly important in this social context to study the factors that ensure psychological stability of personality.

Successful activity in a modern society requires the implementation of all resources of human adjustment to the rapidly changing social conditions to difficult and sometimes extreme life situations and to intrapersonal and social contradictions and conflicts. Adjustment disorders has now become the most common type of all mental disorders. They occur when the stressful events do not reach the degree fatal for a person and spread on his/her microsocial environment instead. Young people usually have adjustment disorders at sharp change of their life

stereotypes. For example, entering the university, induction or the inability to work within their specialty after graduating.

A person makes a choice in difficult situation all his/her life by either using the strategies of coping with problems and conflicts or applying inadequate mechanisms of psychological defense against the difficulties that does not fit his/her self-concept and the subjective world model. The first alternative promotes personal growth and development of readiness for self-realization in general; the second one promotes the emergence of defects in the structure of personality and its activity.

There are objective factors arising in the modern world that hinder this life choice such as rapid social and economic changes, an avalanche of conflicting information and a range of social and psychological problems. Theoretical and experimental analysis of emotional intelligence is one of the promising areas of research because emotional intelligence forms the basis for emotional self-regulation, enhances both self-efficacy and the use of adaptive cognitive style in adverse real-life situations. The problem of identifying the internal conditions of the optimal human reactions to difficult life situations that ensure their personal competence and

psychological well-being is of particular interest. Studies aimed at defining the role of emotional intelligence in the life of personality have revealed the significance of this phenomenon in the perception of the world as well as in its adjustment to changing social conditions.

To confirm this provision, we have conducted the study aimed at identifying the role of emotional intelligence in the process of adaptation of a person to exquisite situations serving as a traumatic factor that ensures personal psychological stability.

According to A.Ja. Antsupov and A.I. Shipilov, psychological stability is a characteristic of personality that determines its ability to maintain optimal functioning in a frustrating and stressful impact of difficult real-life situations. Psychological stability has a complex structure that integrates motivational, emotional, intellectual, strong-willed and psychomotor components.

**Theoretical and methodological bases for study:** Subject of our scientific interest is the emotional component of such psychological category as the psychological stability of personality. According to Antsupov and Shipilov (1999), psychological stability is a characteristic of personality that determines its ability to maintain optimal functioning in a frustrating and stressful impact of difficult real-life situations. Psychological stability has a complex structure that integrates motivational, emotional, intellectual, strong-willed and psychomotor components.

Studies by Kulikov (2001) represent qualitative characteristics of this psychological category. According to the researcher, psychological stability is the personal quality which certain aspects are stability balance and resistance. It helps the personality to confront life difficulties to save its health and performance in various trials of life.

Our concepts are based on the understanding of emotional intelligence as integrative development of personality ensuring its psychological well-being and professional success (Andreeva, 2006).

S.L. Rubinstein and A.N. Leontiev were developing the ideas by L.S. Vygotsky of relation between cognitive and emotional processes.

Emotions, according to S.L. Rubinstein, affect human activity, causing its progress and results while the same emotions are stipulated by the progress and results of this activity.

We know a number of theories describing emotional intelligence, namely the theory of emotional intelligence by Goleman (2008, 1995) a two-component theory of emotional intelligence by Lyusin (2004, 2000)

non-cognitive theory of emotional intelligence by Bar-On (1997) the theory of emotional and intellectual abilities by Mayer *et al.* (1999, 2001).

Analysis of the literature has shown the presence of several approaches to the determination of emotional intelligence concept. The concept of “emotional intelligence” has become relevant just as a factor of social success. High level of self-awareness in combination with the ability to manage emotions allows a person to show self-confidence have credibility and command respect of people.

Emotional intelligence, according to Pavlyuchenkova (2008) is the affective and cognitive phenomenon representing a systemic property of personality, including skills of adequate reflection, self-regulation and the optimal level of empathy and expressiveness.

Going back to the previously set problem regarding factors that ensure psychological stability of personality in social and economic instability we should turn to a category such as psychological defense of personality.

Psychological defense is one of the most controversial innovations in the personality structure, since it contributes to both the stabilization of personality and its disorganization, affecting greatly the characteristics of person activity and his/her communication style. Functions of psychological defenses are controversial. On the one hand, the defense contributes to the person's adaptation to his/her inner peace and mental condition; on the other hand, it can worsen the adaptation to the external social environment and reduce the quality of the professional activity of a person.

There are two views in the domestic psychology of the role of the defense mechanisms in the development of personality. Some psychologists have ascribed positive meaning to the defense mechanisms while others believe that defense mechanisms are rather harmful and negative for person's development.

We adhere to the existing psychological view that the role of the defense structure should not be viewed in terms of its positivity or negativity for personality but based on the functions of defense mechanisms. The main task of psychological defense is to save a personality or its positive state. Therefore, defense mechanisms are the mechanisms of personality stabilization that protect it from overstress. Of course, neither their presence nor activation allow us to speak about the development of personality, the manifestation of the creative potential of a professional as the progress of personality is only possible in resolving conflicts that disturb subjective comfortable state of a person.

Defense mechanisms are always present in the person's behavior to different extents. We can speak, however, about a well-functioning defense structure and inadequate personality defense system. There are the following conditions for successful operation of the defense structure of personality: congruence of defense against threat; flexibility and maturity of defense which means the presence of mainly mature, advanced defense mechanisms ensuring maximum protection of personality structures without retarding the personality development the defense in the defense structure of personality.

In view of the above, we should refer to psychological category such as coping strategy of personality.

Haan (1977) developed the difference between the defense and coping strategy in details. In her opinion, Ego reactions could be divided into two extensive processes defense and coping. Defense mechanisms is a form of denial and coping is a way to address the common problems of survival.

Analysis of the structure of human social behavior in problematic, stressful situations has revealed that the diversity of human behavior ways can be organized into 26 variants of coping strategies. These are conscious variants and elements of behavior that people use in problematic situations. We know their classification by Heim (1988).

Conscious coping strategies may be divided into cognitive, emotional and behavioral strategies, each of which can have adaptive, non-adaptive or relative-adaptive character.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

To determine the relations between the structure of emotional intelligence components and the structure of the coping strategies of personality, we conducted an empirical study which objects were first-year students usually aimed at self-development and having yet neither necessary theoretical and practical knowledge nor a sufficient level of psychological culture. Subjects of the study were 1st year students of humanitarian departments of various universities (field of professional training). Students aged 18-20 years. Total sample amount was 68 persons.

We conducted experiment by using the following techniques: "emotional intelligence" evaluation technique by N. Hall, modified questionnaire for determining the psychological well-being of personality by K. Reef (T.D. Shevelenkova, P.P. Fesenko) and a questionnaire for determining the coping mechanisms of personality by E. Heim. To verify the nature of the relation between the

structural elements of emotional intelligence and coping strategies of personality we used the following mathematical apparatus.

We further processed the findings of the empirical study using mathematical and statistical analysis. The significance of differences in indicator intensity was assessed by Student t-test. Structures formed by the indicators were identified using correlation analysis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Analysis of average indicators has revealed clear problems in the development of productive coping strategies in many students surveyed which indicates the insufficient level of their personal intelligence. Search for social support, the confrontation and escape-avoidance were the first in the list of coping strategies ranked by frequency of use in complex situations; the second were distancing, self-control, positive revaluation and the third were responsibility acceptance and solution planning.

Despite some advantages such ratio of chosen coping strategies in general does not form the basis for psychological safety and therefore, successful self-realization of personality. For instance, search for social support is one of the first priorities but the acceptance of responsibility ranks second to last, hence such a combination of strategies entails both clearly non-productive behavior in complex situations and weak manifestation of suprasituational activity and independence.

In our opinion, low rank of "solutions planning" indicator, reflects the fact that many students do not master self-control technique that can be overcome by special training. However, the lack of willingness to take responsibility for choosing the way out of a difficult situation indicates the presence of psychological "barriers" for personal development in a large number of the students, among which are apparently, the insufficiently developed emotional intelligence as a factor of both adequate perception of reality and search for the best ways of overcoming difficulties.

According to the classification by Heim (1988) the structure of coping strategies of the students also ensures no psychological readiness for self-realization. The first were non-adaptive coping strategies, the second relatively adaptive coping strategies and the third adaptive coping strategies. At the same time, the group of non-adaptive strategies has dissimulation, suppression of emotions, ignoring, recession and active avoidance prevailing in it. Passive cooperation, sensing and compensation usually prevail in the relatively adaptive strategies; setting own values, addressing and optimism

are common to the adaptive strategies. Such coping strategies as problem analysis, cooperation, altruism and keeping own temper are rarely chosen.

Analysis of the structure of emotional intelligence has shown that emotional awareness is above the average in students; the empathy and recognition of others' emotions have average level of expressiveness and self-motivation and controlling own emotions have low and below the average level of expressiveness. This result is quite common in the diagnosis of different respondents, including students. However, the correlation analysis of our study has revealed that self-motivation and emotions controlling are the central system-forming indicators in the correlation series and have relations at the highest significance level.

Self-motivation has twelve correlations, ten of which are external with coping strategies. At the same time, 28% of the surveyed have low self-motivation, 32% have the same below the average and 33% have this indicator highly expressed.

At the level of statistical significance  $p = 0.001$  self-motivation interacts with the indicators as follows: solutions planning, adaptive coping strategies, responsibility acceptance and cognitive coping strategies; level 0.01 indicators of escape-avoidance (negative correlation), confrontation (negative correlation); level  $p = 0.05$  indicators of emotional coping strategies, positive revaluation, non-adaptive coping strategies (negative correlation).

Emotions controlling has nine correlations, including eight with coping strategies. The average sample value is at low level (41% have low level, 38% have level below the average and 21% have average level).

Controlling emotions at a high significance level correlates with following indicators: adaptive coping strategies, solutions planning, relatively adaptive coping strategies and cognitive coping strategies; level of statistical significance of  $p = 0.01$  search for social support, escape-avoidance (negative correlation); level 0.01 confrontation (negative correlation) and responsibility acceptance.

Empathy has the average level of development (31% have low level, 43% have level below the average and 27% have average level).

Empathy at a significance level  $p = 0.001$  correlates with indicators such as confrontation (negative correlation), search for social support; significance level  $p = 0.01$  positive revaluation, adaptive coping strategies; significance level  $p = 0.05$  escape-avoidance (negative correlation), acceptance of responsibility.

Qualitative analysis of the individual structures of psychological defense of students gave us interesting results. Avoidance and suppression of emotions prevail

in the non-adaptive coping strategies; compensation, passive cooperation, distraction are common to relatively non-adaptive coping strategies and setting own values, addressing and optimism are common to the adaptive strategies. Solutions planning, problem analysis, emotional release and keeping own temper hold a low rank of being chosen in difficult life situations.

These productive coping strategies rigidly correlate with the components of emotional intelligence, mostly with those having insufficient level of development in the majority of students.

**Summary:** The obtained results allow us to outline the development of integrated characteristics of personality such as emotional intelligence, through the formation of indicators such as self-motivation and emotions controlling, ensuring thereby adaptive elements of coping behavior.

Presented empirical findings broaden the understanding of the role of emotional intelligence in the self-development and self-realization of students and allow strengthening the resources of coping behavior which is a determinant of successful life of personality.

## CONCLUSION

Modern social and economic situation has forced demand for maintenance of health and social functioning of personality. This made necessary to find the factors that would ensure psychological stability of personality. Components of emotional competence and adaptive coping strategies of personality were determined as key factors.

Self-motivation and emotions controlling are that central system-forming indicator of an integrated characteristics such as emotional intelligence.

Thus, a high level of self-awareness in combination with the ability to manage oneself and own feelings, defines the adaptive strategies of personality, ensuring thereby its psychological stability.

The created diagnostic system helps to reveal aspects of development and the level of severity of personal emotional intelligence as well as to have intentional effect on the development of main components of the integral characteristics, providing thereby psychological support to the readiness of a student's personality for self-fulfillment.

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