5 - PERSONALITY TRAITS, WELL-BEING AND PAIN PERCEPTION AS PREDICTORS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract

The aims of this research are: to prominence the difference between genders regarding personality traits, level of well-being and perception of pain; to highlight a arguable correlation between personality traits , perception of pain, level of well-being and prediction of emotional intelligence; to identify the fact that personality traits, perception of pain, level of well-being are predictors of emotional intelligence; to highlight the possible differences between groups regarding emotional intelligence and level of well-being. It was inquired if personality traits, level of well-being and perception of pain are predictors of emotional intelligence with help of 4tests (personality questionnaire HEXACO-PI-R, psychological scale of well-being of Ryff, perception of pain questionnaire, TEIQue-SF).This research was made with the participation of 100 students from Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of Bucharest University. Results indicated the fact that personality traits, perception of pain are predictors of emotional intelligence and the difference between genders regarding sentimentality, emotionality, inquisitiveness, creativity, meaning of life, cognitive control and social support. It also revealed a significant correlation between personality traits and level of well-being, between personality traits and perception of pain, between level of well-being and emotional intelligence and between perception of pain and emotional intelligence .The results also proved differences regarding level of self- sufficiency, self-control and self-acceptance in correlation with level of emotional intelligence. Results of this research confirm results of previous researches but also bring evidence regarding differences between groups and genders.

Cuvinte cheie: stare de bine, inteligenta emotionala, perceptia durerii
Keywords: wellbeing, emotional intelligence, pain perception

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1. INTRODUCTION

Salovey and Mayer (1990) were the first who proposed a theory of EI in literature. In their most recent model, they define EI as the ability to perceive and express emotions, using emotions to facilitate thought, understand emotions and adjust emotions. The Mayer and Salovey model is different from other models that define and measure EI as a set of self-perceived abilities, skills and personality traits including optimism and self-esteem (Bar-On, 1997, 2005).

On the other hand, Goleman stressed the importance of long term emotional intelligence and attracted the attention of researchers worldwide. According to Goleman (1995 & 1998), EI is an important factor in determining personal success as a student, teacher, parent and leader.The relationship between EI and personality traits is close because EI is relevant to understanding and managing emotions that are very important in the construction of personality.

The relationship between the two variables has been extensively investigated, but the relationship between these two constructs depends on the measures used to evaluate. It was found that EI is significantly correlated with neuroticism, extraversion, conscientiousness and agreeableness, but moderately related to openness to experience.

Boyatzis and Hall (2004) examined EI with Golemans' emotional competence inventory (1998), and this was significantly related to extraversion, openness to experience and conscientiousness. The relationship between EI and personality traits has been intensively discussed in the literature. Some EI models are linked to personality theory, especially mixed models (Bar-On, 2005 & Goleman, 1995). Even a pure EI model, proposed by Mayer and Salovey (1993), demonstrated empirically significant correlations with measures of personality.

Personality is the ultimate achievement of innate behavior of a human being, while personality traits are closely linked to EI. Considering the five factorial model of personality traits, it was empirically shown that IE has significant negative correlations with extraversion and neuroticism and a positive correlation with agreeableness, openness to experience and conscientiousness.

Emotional intelligence is positively correlated with extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience, while EI and neuroticism correlated significantly negatively. We paid attention to gender differences regarding EI and personality traits. It has been established that women tend to be more expressive than men, to understand and recognize the emotions of others better and have greater empathy.

It was found that women had significant higher levels of neurosis, extraversion and agreeableness, while men had higher scores on openness to experience. Gender differences with respect to consciousness were not significant. Goleman suggests that EI is a determinant of success at work and in careers. EI may be even more important than the general mental ability to determine personality traits. According to Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2002) EI makes an individual to be able to identify their own emotions and those of others.

Using and understanding emotions and the ability to manage these emotions are also required to develop a strong personality. Existing studies have provided empirical evidence that individuals with high levels of EI have more successful career, build stronger personal relationships and enjoy better health than those who have low levels of EI (Imran, 2004).

EI and personality traits are two important parts of psychology and there is substantial evidence about how these two constructs are related. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000), state that emotionally intelligent people are more empathetic. Also, other personality traits are associated with different aspects of EI.

Various studies argue that EI is primarily associated with personality traits, for example, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, self-perceived creativity, life satisfaction and styles of thought, with only a relatively low relationship with verbal intelligence.

Extensive research on emotions in the workplace suggests that emotions can lead to increased productivity, innovation and achievement of individuals, teams and organizations (Cooper, 1997). Professors with high EI are more effective in teaching or managing students in the classroom and cultivate positive personality traits such as agreeableness, extroversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience.

IE negatively correlated with neuroticism, as an emotional effectively and stable individual dose not match the neuroticism profile that describes the tendency to experience negative emotions and related processes in response to the perceived threat and punishment; These include anxiety, depression, anger, and low self-consciousness. Among neuroticism traits are fear, irritability, low self esteem, social anxiety, weak pulse and inhibition (Costa & McCrae, 1988).

With regards to the relationship between gender and EI, there is conflicting evidence. A number of authors have found that women have a more developed EI, but there are also results showing that the males have a higher IE. Dunn (2002) observed that women have high scores regarding empathy, social responsibility and interpersonal relationship than men. A number of personal factors, social and of

personality, for example empathy, flexible thinking, self-awareness, etc. seem to affect EI to a large extent, which can lead to these conflicting results,

Goodwin and Gotlib (2003) determined the association between sex and five major personality factors, and identified the role of personality factors in the association between sex and depression among adults in the United States. Neuroticism levels, agreeableness, extraversion and conscientiousness were significantly higher among women than among men; in contrast level of openness to experience was significantly higher among men. Previous research has shown that up to early adulthood, low neuroticism tends to be higher among women than among men.

EI is a multidimensional construct that involves the ability to perceive and identify emotions and use emotional experiences productively and to understand and manage emotions (Mayer et al., 2003). Because these skills are so important to successful adaptation to the environment, theorizing often assumed that there should be a reliable link between EI and psychological health (Schutte et al., 2007).

A recent meta-analysis suggests that when taking into account the available literature, there is a link between EI and overall psychological health. A research found null associations between MSCIET and well-being and only modest subjective connections with psychological well-being. A study using Mies, a precursor of MSCEIT, found no association between EI and well-being.

Gender is the fundamental factor depending on the context that shapes and forms many aspects of emotional life (Shields, 2002). Probably because of gender socialization that occurs in childhood, women tend to have higher EI levels than men. Women are also more willing than men to talk about emotions, have a greater ability to differentiate between different emotional states and are more likely to express intense and frequent motions and less likely to regulate their emotions through their suppression.

There is also evidence that women may differ from men in the momentary experience of the emotion itself, but rather that they differ in their understanding of how global or retrospective they manifest.

These lines of research suggest that the ways in which men and women conceptualize, use and regulate emotional experience are different. Considering how these central aspects of emotions relate both to IE and as well as psychological health, sex is therefore a prime candidate to be examined as a critical moderator regarding the relations between EI and psychological health.

Research has shown that EI is associated with lower emotional stress when people are faced with stressful situations. However, few studies have examined the relationship between EI and pain. IE may be an important factor to explain the

perception of pain. It is widely accepted that pain is critically subjective determined of emotional processing.

More contemporary theories of pain assign a significant role in emotional perception and communication processes to pain. For example, a negative emotion appears to work by increasing the intensity of pain. Thus it can be hypothesized that the proper emotional processing of information, people can manage and reduce the negative emotions evoked in situations of pain, which in turn reduces the perceived intensity of pain. According to this hypothesis, EI would make the experience less painful by reducing the negative affect associated with it. In this way, it would adversely affect the relationship between EI and pain.

Results from several studies support this hypothesis and showed how EI-related variables such as emotional regulation and emotional confidence in their abilities are predictive of pain. However, to date, no study has investigated the relation of the experimental EI evaluated by measurement of the performance and experience of acute pain. In addition, no studies have examined the adverse influence that affects the relationship between EI and pain.

Research indicates that people with negative emotions have higher levels of sensory activity and greater affective pain. Previous studies have shown a significant relationship between negative emotions and perceived pain.

While between sensory and affective pain, normally there is a strong positive correlation, this relationship can vary depending on the type of experienced pain; In addition, different experimental procedures can change the selective size of pain or another.

Smart people experience emotional stress and pain in a more efficient manner. These people are able to deal with stress in a less aversive manner, which results in less pain and anxiety.

People with high EI perceive less pain because they generate less negative affect. In other words, they are able to use the generated emotional pain in a more efficient manner, reducing negative emotions without repressing or exaggerating information contained therein. In this way, such individuals demonstrate a better understanding of the emotional stimulus. People with high EI feel more in control of their environment as they can manage the negative emotions they experience.

Experimental studies provide evidence for the effect mood has on pain. A number of laboratory studies have evaluated the effect of different emotions on pain. They show that the change affects the emotional pain sensation and emotional state intensifies or decreases pain perception, depending on whether it is negative or positive emotion induced.

1.1. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research proposes the following objectives:

•highlighting gender differences on personality trait regarding wellbeing and pain perception;

•highlighting potential correlations between personality traits, pain perception, well-being and emotional intelligence;

•identifying and highlighting the fact that personality traits, wellbeing and pain perception are predictors of emotional intelligence;

•highlighting possible differences between the groups on emotional intelligence and wellbeing.

1.2. HYPOTHESES

General hypotheses:

1. There are statistically significant gender differences on personality traits.

2. There are statistically significant gender differences regarding the level well-being.

3. There were statistically significant differences of gender on pain perception.

2. METHOD

2.1. PARTICIPANTS

Participants included in the study were 100 students of the Faculty of Psychology, University of Bucharest. Of the 100 students, 13 were male and 87 female aged 18-33 years (M = 20.05, SD = 2.057).

2.2. INSTRUMENTS

The study is based on data collected through questionnaires measuring personality, well-being, pain perception and emotional intelligence.

The HEXACO-PI-R personality questionnaire (Kibeom Lee & Michael C. Ashton) http://hexaco.org adapted on the Romanian population. It consists of 100 items and the answer varies for each item on a Lickert scale from 1 (not my thing at all) to 5 (always my thing). This questionnaire measured the following dimensions: Honesty-Humility, Honesty, Fairness, Avoidance of greed, Modesty, Emotionality, Fear, Anxiety, Addiction, Sentimentality, Extraversion, Self-esteem,

Social boldness, Sociability, Liveliness, Capacity for forgiveness, Gentleness and flexibility, Patience, Conscientiousness, Organization, Diligence, Perfectionism, Prudence, Openness to experience, Aesthetic appreciation, Curiosity, Creativity, Nonconformity and Altruism.

Ryff's psychological wellbeing scale(PWB-R). This tool was developed in 1989 and measures the psychological wellbeing of the individual. It contains 42 items, with responses on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Of thedr 42 items, 22 items are formulated positively, and 20 are reversed. Items are divided into six subscales: Autonomy, Control, Personal Development, Positive Relationships, Meaning of life and Self-acceptance.

The questionnaire for perception of pain (Vienna Tests System, 2012) using four scales measuring pain that match specific treatments for pain. These scales are: avoidance, activity, social support and cognitive control. The first three are based on the learning theory that influence pain perception, which means that the experience of the person is intensified by withdrawing negative (and positive reinforcement. The test is presented as a 29-item questionnaire, and the answers vary on a Lickert scale from 1 (not at all suits me) to 5 (totally suits me).

Emotional intelligence questionnaire - the short version (TEIQue-SF). This instrument consists of 30 items and is designed to measure emotional intelligence globally. This short form is based on the full form of TEIQue (Petrides & Furnham, 2003). Two items from each of the 15 subscales of TEIQue were selected for inclusion in the short version, the choice of relying mainly on their correlation with the corresponding total subscale scores. This procedure was aimed at ensuring adequate internal consistency and a wide coverage of the field sampling construction. Answers vary on a Lickert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

2.3. PROCEDURE

Testing was done individually through questionnaires by paper and pencil method. The environment in which they completed the questionnaires was an appropriate one (without disturbance). The subjects voluntarily participated in this research. Subjects were informed about the research purposes and were applied all four questionnaires on the same day.

3. RESULTS

Table 1 - Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for variables: sincerity, honesty, modesty to avoidance of greed for males

		Sincerity	Honesty	Avoidance of greed	Modesty
N		13	13	13	13
Normal Parameters[b,c]	Mean	14,77	13,77	13,31	13,54
	Std. Deviation	3,244	5,600	5,513	3,666
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,144	,270	,175	,174
	Positive	,087	,194	,165	,174
	Negative	-,144	-,270	-,175	-,134
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		,518	,974	,633	,627
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,951	,299	,818	,827

Table 1 shows data distribution for variables: honesty, sincerity, avoidance of greed, modesty for males. As it can be seen, $p > 0.05$ which means that the distribution is normal.

Table 2 - Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for variables: sincerity, honesty, modesty to avoidance of greed for females

		Sincerity	Honesty	Avoidance of greed	Modesty
N		87	87	87	87
Normal Parameters[b,c]	Mean	14,77	15,53	11,94	13,59
	Std. Deviation	3,402	3,775	3,829	3,212
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,089	,159	,095	,090
	Positive	,080	,118	,085	,090
	Negative	-,089	-,159	-,095	-,072
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		,826	1,482	,889	,836
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,503	,025	,408	,486

Table 2 shows data distribution for variables: sincerity, honesty, avoidance of greed, modesty for females. As it can be seen $p > 0.05$ which means that the distribution is normal with the exception of variable honesty, where $p < 0.05$ which means that in this case the data are not normally distributed.

Table 3 - Mann-Whitney U test for variables: sincerity, honesty, avoidance of greed, modesty and honesty-humility

	Sincerity	Honesty	Avoidance of greed	Modesty	Honesty-humility
Mann-Whitney U	557,500	486,500	453,000	548,000	542,500
Wilcoxon W	4385,500	577,500	4281,000	639,000	4370,500
Z	-,082	-,814	-1,157	-,180	-,236
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,934	,416	,247	,857	,813

In Table 3 Mann-Whitney test scores and statistical significance for variables are shown: sincerity, honesty, avoidance of greed, modesty, honesty-humility. $P > 0.05$ means that there are no statistically significant gender differences.

Table 4 - Mann-Whitney U test for variables: fear, anxiety, addiction, sentimentality, emotionality

	Fear	Anxiety	Addiction	Sentimentality	Emotionality
Mann-Whitney U	401,500	500,000	354,000	273,000	282,000
Wilcoxon W	492,500	591,000	445,000	364,000	373,000
Z	-1,688	-,676	-2,176	-3,018	-2,908
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,091	,499	,030	,003	,004

Table 4 shows the observed values and statistical significance for the Mann-Whitney test for variables: fear, anxiety, addiction, sentimentality, emotionality. P> 0.05 means that there are no statistically significant gender differences except for variables: sentimentality and emotionality (p <0.05).

Table 5 - Mann-Whitney U test for variables: self-esteem, social boldness, sociability, liveliness, extraversion

	Self-esteem	Social boldness	Sociability	Liveliness	Extraversion
Mann-Whitney U	526,000	542,000	444,000	551,500	529,000
Wilcoxon W	617,000	4370,000	535,000	642,500	620,000
Z	-,408	-,242	-1,250	-,144	-,374
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,683	,809	,211	,885	,708

Table 5 shows Mann-Whitney test value and statistical significance for the variables: self-esteem, social boldness, sociability, liveliness, extraversion. P> 0.05 means that there are no statistically significant gender differences.

Table 6 - Mann-Whitney U test for variables: capacity for forgiveness, gentleness, flexibility, patience, agreeableness

	capacity for forgiveness	gentleness	flexibility	patience	agreeableness
Mann-Whitney U	430,000	504,000	549,500	522,000	512,000
Wilcoxon W	521,000	4332,000	640,500	4350,000	603,000
Z	-1,395	-,634	-,165	-,448	-,549
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,163	,526	,869	,654	,583

Table 6 shows Mann-Whitney test value and statistical significance for the variables: capacity for forgiveness, gentleness, flexibility, patience, agreeableness. P> 0.05 means that there are no statistically significant gender differences.

Table 7 - Mann-Whitney U test for variables: organization, diligence, perfectionism, caution, conscientiousness

	organization	diligence	perfectionism	caution	conscientiousness
Mann-Whitney U	390,000	525,000	552,500	516,000	449,500
Wilcoxon W	481,000	616,000	4380,500	607,000	540,500
Z	-1,806	-,417	-,134	-,510	-1,190
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,071	,676	,893	,610	,234

Table 7 shows Mann-Whitney test value and statistical significance for variables: organization, diligence, perfectionism, caution, conscientiousness. P> 0.05 means that there are no statistically significant gender differences.

Table 8 - Mann-Whitney U test for variables: aesthetic appreciation, curiosity, creativity, nonconformity, openness to experience

	Aesthetic appreciation	Curiosity	Creativity	Nonconformity	Openness to experience
Mann-Whitney U	455,000	334,000	348,000	446,000	400,500
Wilcoxon W	546,000	4162,000	4176,000	4274,000	4228,500
Z	-1,138	-2,382	-2,244	-1,238	-1,693
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,255	,017	,025	,216	,090

Table 8 shows Mann-Whitney test value and statistical significance for variables: aesthetic appreciation, curiosity, creativity, nonconformity, openness to experience. P> 0.05 means that there is no statistically significant gender differences except for curiosity and creativity variables (p <0.05).

Table 9 - Mann-Whitney U test for variables: altruism, autonomy, control, personal development, positive relationships

	Altruism	Autonomy	Control	Personal development	Positive relationships
Mann-Whitney U	472,000	511,500	383,500	413,000	416,500
Wilcoxon W	563,000	4339,500	4211,500	4241,000	507,500
Z	-,969	-,556	-1,874	-1,573	-1,535
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,333	,578	,061	,116	,125

Table 9 shows Mann-Whitney test value and statistical significance for variables: altruism, autonomy, control, personal development, positive relationships.

P> 0.05 means that there are no statistically significant gender differences.

Table 10 - Mann-Whitney U test for variables: the meaning of life, self-acceptance, avoidance, cognitive control, social support

	Meaning of life	Self-acceptance	Avoidance	Cognitive control	Social support
Mann-Whitney U	370,500	395,500	514,000	369,000	437,000
Wilcoxon W	4198,500	4223,500	605,000	4197,000	528,000
Z	-2,008	-1,752	-,529	-2,017	-1,319
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,045	,080	,597	,044	,187

Table 10 shows Mann-Whitney test values and statistical significance for variables: the meaning of life, self-acceptance, avoidance, cognitive control, social support. P> 0.05 means that there are no statistically significant gender differences variables except for the meaning of life, cognitive control, social support (p <0.05).

Table 11 - Mann-Whitney U test for the activity variable

	Activity
Mann-Whitney U	375,000
Wilcoxon W	4203,000
Z	-1,957
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,050

Table 11 shows Mann-Whitney test values and statistical significance for: activity. P <0.05 means that there are statistically significant gender differences regarding activity.

4. DISCUSSIONS

The main purpose of this study is to identify whether personality traits variables, well-being level and pain perception are predictors of emotional intelligence. The results in this regard indicate that factor 4 is composed of the variables: openness to experience, curiosity, nonconformity, creativity, aesthetic appreciation, cognitive control, activity and factor 2 consists of variables: extraversion, alertness, self-esteem, sociability, social boldness which predict emotional intelligence and meaning of life.

Factor 2 composed of variables: extraversion, liveliness, self-esteem, sociability, social boldness are predictors of the variable self-acceptance, and factor 1 composed of variables: agreeableness, honesty, humility, gentleness, avoidance of greed, flexibility, capacity for forgiveness, patience, modesty, sincerity, altruism, fairness, age predict the level of control.

Also, this study proposed to identify whether there are significant gender differences in terms of personality traits, well-being and pain perception, highlighting possible correlations between personality traits, pain perception, well-being and emotional intelligence and to highlight possible differences between groups on emotional intelligence and wellbeing.

Regarding the gender differences hypothesis of the study, they were not confirmed with the exception of some, which means that there are statistically significant gender differences on sentimentality, emotionality, curiosity, creativity, meaning of life, cognitive control and social support.

Previous research conducted by Goodwin and Gotlib (2003) in terms of gender differences showed that neuroticism, agreeableness, extraversion and conscientiousness levels were significantly higher among women than among men; in contrast the level of openness to experience was significantly higher among men. The literature points out that, until early adulthood, low neuroticism tends to be higher among women than among men.

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SUMMARY

The aims of this research are: to prominence the difference between genders regarding personality traits, level of well-being and perception of pain; to highlight a arguable correlation between personality traits , perception of pain, level of well-being and prediction of emotional intelligence; to identify the fact that personality traits, perception of pain, level of well-being are predictors of emotional intelligence; to highlight the possible differences between groups regarding emotional intelligence and level of well-being. It was inquired if personality traits, level of well-being and perception of pain are predictors of emotional intelligence with help of 4 tests (personality questionnaire HEXACO-PI-R, psychological scale of well-being of Ryff, perception of pain questionnaire, TEIQue-SF).This research was made with the participation of 100 students from Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of Bucharest University. Results indicated the fact that personality traits, perception of pain are predictors of emotional intelligence and the difference between genders regarding sentimentality, emotionality, inquisitiveness, creativity, meaning of life, cognitive control and social support. It also revealed a significant correlation between personality traits and level of well-being, between personality traits and perception of pain, between level of well-being and emotional intelligence and between perception of pain and emotional intelligence. The results also proved differences regarding level of self- sufficiency, self-control and self-acceptance in correlation with level of emotional intelligence. Results of this research confirm results of previous researches but also bring evidence regarding differences between groups and genders.