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High emotional intelligence: family psychosocial factors

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Abstract

Since a family plays a significant role in the development of a personality in the childhood, it is very important to find out, what are the exact social and psychological family factors that are the most essential for the development of emotional intelligence (EI). In the study, data from 1,430 subjects was collected in various regions of Lithuania. The average subject age was 19.7 years (SD=3.29). 43.2 per cent men and 55.5 per cent women (1.3 per cent of participants have not specified their gender) participated in the research. The majority of subjects were high school (56.7 per cent) and university (35.2 per cent) students. EI-DARL methodology (Antiniene & Lekaviciene, 2014) was used to assess EI. It was established that EI level is statistically significantly related to some family factors: psychological climate in the family, strength of subject relations with their mother/ father, subjective perception of family financial status, etc.

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1. Introduction

As family plays an important role in a child's mind and personality development in childhood, it is important to determine what specific social and psychological family factors are the most important for the development of EI. The importance of emotional ties between parents and children is proven by many studies. E.g., researchers confirm that there is a relation between parent capability to control emotions and such ability development in children (Cumberland-Li, Eisenberg, Champion, Gershoff, & Fabes, 2003); that parent emotional intelligence has an impact

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on emotional development of children (Field & Kolbert, 2006; Marsland & Likavec, 2003); that parents who are sensitive to emotional needs of their children typically raise emotionally intelligent children (Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler, & Mayer, 2000).

Various studies also show that not only an objective emotional link between parents and children is important, but also subjective assessment of the said link by the child himself or, from the time perspective, when the said child becomes an adult. In other words, relation between EI dimensions (perception, understanding and control of emotions) and subjectively perceived warmth of parents in the childhood is observed (Ciarrochi, Chan, & Caputi, 2000; Saarni, 1997; Barber, Stolz, Olsen, Collins, & Burchinal, 2005; Ryan, Deci, Grolnick, & LaGuardia, 2006; Sillick & Schutte, 2006; Asghari & Besharat, 2011). Nastasa and Sala (2012) confirm that cold communication in the family negatively correlates with EI level. The adopted communication style in parent interaction with children may cause unbridled emotions of their child later. E.g., studies show that aggressiveness, inability to restrain, though most likely is determined by various factors, may be linked to the communication style in the family. Cleveland (2014) has established that aggressiveness of girls correlates with authoritarianism in the family, while EI and aggressiveness correlation is negative; the said two factors explain one fifth of social aggression cases. 12–19 year old teenager satisfaction with their parents study performed by Dabke (2014) showed that parents with higher EI are able to guarantee emotionally warmer climate in the family, which in its turn has an impact on children's and teenagers' EI development.

In the analysis of links between various family factors and EI significantly less attention has been paid to the issue of the importance of family fullness to child's successful emotional development. Studies of this kind are not numerous, e.g., studies of young people living in divorced or full families recently performed by Singh and Modi (2012) revealed that emotional intelligence was higher of those who live in full families.

Researchers are also wondering whether greater family income may guarantee a more positive environment in the family and consequently better development of emotional skills. Empiric study performed by Nasir (2011) confirmed such relationship; positive correlation between emotional intelligence level of the subjects and financial well-being of their family has been established. There are more studies that confirm such results (Harrod & Scheer, 2005; Kaur & Jaswal, 2005; Özabaci, 2006). However, it should be noted that in some studies such correlations were not confirmed, e.g. Katyal and Awasthi (2006). As importance of various family factors is still being discussed and unambiguous conclusions have not yet been reached, it is important to continue this kind of research.

The purpose of the presented article is to demonstrate how various family factors are related to the EI level of a person. Objectives of the study are:

- a. To assess relations between family status (i.e. with whom the subject presently lives: with parents, independently, married, with a girlfriend/friend, etc.) of the subject and the subject's EI;
- b. To determine how the type of the family (i.e., a full family, with one of the parents, a foster home, etc.), in which the subject has grown up is related to the subject's EI;
- c. To examine relationships between the prevailing emotional background of the interecine relations in the subject's family and EI;
- d. To assess the importance of relationship with parents to the subject and the connection of the said factor with the EI of the subject;
- e. To determine the relation between the number of brothers/sisters of the subject, the succession of their birth and their EI
- f. To examine relations between the family financial status and subjects' EI.

2. Method

2.1. Subjects

A total of 1430 subjects were interviewed. The research involved young studying, employed people, also the unemployed, involved in various community and political organizations and even people sentenced to imprisonment. The target group – youth from 17 to 27 years of age, $M=19,7$, $SD=3,29$, $N=1400$. A control-contrast group of older than 27 years of age people ($N=30$) is included in the sample for data comparison and a better statistical dispersion of the characteristics. Participants in the survey consisted of 43.2 per cent men and 55.5 per cent women (1.3 per cent have not specified their gender). A total of 1092 subjects who at the time of the survey were studying were surveyed: secondary school and gymnasium students from forms 11-12 ($N=371$), professional

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