



Self- and other-focused emotional intelligence: Development and validation of the Rotterdam Emotional Intelligence Scale (REIS)



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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to develop an instrument to measure emotional intelligence (EI). This novel scale distinguishes between four factors, namely, self- and other-focused emotion appraisal and emotion regulation. In Study 1, the Rotterdam Emotional Intelligence Scale (REIS) was developed and examined with respect to its factorial structure and reliability ($N = 383$). In Study 2, the factorial structure of the REIS was validated in two new samples ($N = 2728$ and $N = 590$). Study 3 examined convergent and discriminant validity by comparing the REIS dimensions with other EI instruments, cognitive intelligence, and personality ($N = 108$ and $N = 105$). The criterion validity of the REIS was examined in Study 4 ($N = 73$, $N = 95$, and $N = 103$). The results indicate that the REIS follows a four-factorial structure and can be reliably measured with 28 items. The REIS was strongly correlated with other self-reported EI instruments and weakly to moderately correlated with an ability EI test, cognitive intelligence, and personality. Moreover, self-focused emotion regulation was negatively associated with tutors' perceived stress, whereas other-focused emotion regulation was positively associated with tutors' work engagement, jobseekers' other-rated interview performance, and leaders' transformational leadership style.

Scientific interest in the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in different life domains is flourishing (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Martins, Ramalho, & Morin, 2010). EI can be broadly defined as the knowledge and/or competencies to effectively deal with emotions to regulate social and emotional behaviors (Petrides, 2011; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Zeidner, Roberts, & Matthews, 2008). In previous studies, EI has been associated with both intrapersonal (i.e., health) and interpersonal (i.e., being social) benefits. Specifically, EI was positively associated with mental and physical health, work performance, and the quality of social interactions (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Lopes et al., 2004; Martins et al., 2010). As the field is moving forward, researchers are becoming interested in the processes that underlie the positive effects of EI (e.g., Lievens & Chan, 2010). Accordingly, an important question is whether dealing with one's own emotions or the emotions of other individuals are of equal importance for the prediction of criteria (Brasseur, Grégoire, Bourdu, & Mikolajczak, 2013; Zeidner et al., 2008). We propose that both EI dimensions (i.e., dealing with one's own emotions and dealing with others' emotions) may have a positive impact; however, this impact may occur in different life domains. To illustrate, effectively dealing with the emotions of the self presumably plays a major role in staying (mentally and physically) healthy, whereas effectively dealing with the emotions of others may be more important to facilitate smooth

social interactions. As the positive effects of EI may thus reflect different processes, it may be relevant to differentiate self- from other-focused EI.

The rise of EI to a prominent research topic has stimulated the development of various EI instruments. Although there has been substantial debate on the format of these instruments (i.e., ability tests or self-reported questionnaires; Roberts, Matthews, & Zeidner, 2010), to date, the question of whether they should involve both self- and other-focused EI dimensions has received relatively little attention. Accordingly, most EI instruments do not explicitly distinguish self- from other-focused EI. Therefore, it remains largely unclear which EI dimension contributes to which criterion. We consider this a limitation in the field because self-focused EI dimensions may not always reconcile with their other-focused counterparts (Niven, Totterdell, Stride, & Holman, 2011) and may have differential effects. In the related, yet somewhat separate, research field of emotion regulation, the distinction between dealing with one's own emotions or the emotions of others is well acknowledged. Instruments have been developed that measure both self and other-focused emotion regulation (e.g., Emotion Regulation of Others and Self Scale; Niven et al., 2011) or one of these factors (e.g., Managing the Emotions of Others Scale; Austin & O'Donnell, 2013). By combining these measures with EI measures, scholars have attempted

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to balance the focus on the ways individuals deal with self- and other-emotions (Austin, Saklofske, Smith, & Tohver, 2014). In a first attempt to develop an instrument that distinguishes self- from other-focused EI, the Profile of Emotional Competence (PEC) was developed (Brasseur et al., 2013). Although the theoretical approach of the PEC is promising, its distinction in ten highly correlated facets did not enable a meaningful differentiation between self- and other-focused EI. Thus, as the facets of the PEC are relatively narrow and fine-grained, it remains difficult to disentangle which facet is responsible for a specific effect. We therefore argue for a more parsimonious alternative. Consequently, the major aim of the current paper is to develop and validate a short and simple scale to explicitly measure self- and other-focused EI. We believe that this type of scale is vital in unraveling the processes that underlie EI.

1. Theoretical background

Although the EI literature is abundant, there is no consensus regarding the definition and measurement of the construct. Efforts continue to refine the models and measurements of EI (Keefer, 2015). The two major and overarching perspectives are the ability- and trait-positions of EI (Siegling, Saklofske, & Petrides, 2015). The ability-position defines EI as a set of emotion-related abilities akin to cognitive abilities (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Zeidner et al., 2008). By contrast, the trait-position defines EI as a set of emotion-related traits more akin to personality (Petrides, Pita, & Kokkinaki, 2007). At the core of the debate between these two positions lies the way in which EI is measured, i.e., with an ability test similar to the way cognitive intelligence is measured or a self-reported instrument that resembles the way personality is measured. The current research follows this latter tradition by constructing a self-reported instrument to examine self- and other-focused EI. Self-reported EI instruments appear more straightforward for a construct that addresses subjective emotional experiences than ability EI tests (Siegling et al., 2015). Furthermore, self-reported EI instruments have demonstrated superior explanatory power over cognitive intelligence and personality in predicting criteria such as job performance (O'Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver, & Story, 2011).

1.1. Self- and other-focused emotional intelligence

The introduction of EI in the scientific literature was partially based on the work of Gardner (1983), who differentiated the concept of intelligence in multiple dimensions. Specifically, Gardner proposed that the emotional aspect of intelligence consists of two dimensions: intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence. Accordingly, Salovey and Mayer (1990) distinguished emotion appraisal in the self from emotion appraisal in others, as well as emotion regulation in the self from emotion regulation in others. However, in their Four-Branch Model, they revised this previous definition and added the components of emotion use and emotion understanding to their conceptualization. Although this resulted in a richer pallet of EI dimensions, the distinction between self- and other-focused EI dimensions was pushed into the background because “each branch applied to emotions internally and in others” (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 10). The Four-Branch Model became an influential model in the literature, and whether one's capacity to deal with one's own emotions can be considered to be similar to one's capacity to deal with the emotions of others is still a conceptual issue (Brasseur et al., 2013; Zeidner et al., 2008). Furthermore, merging self- and other-focused EI dimensions may mask their unique effects. In an attempt to address these theoretical issues, we argue to reinstate the explicit and meaningful distinction between self- and other-focused EI.

To illustrate, some individuals are more competent in the regulation of their own emotions than in the regulation of the emotions of others (Niven et al., 2011). This finding implies that when the source of emotions is not specified in EI instruments, incorrect conclusions may be drawn. Furthermore, self- and other-focused EI dimensions may not

always reconcile. Psychotherapists who are overly involved with their clients' emotions are at risk for burnout because they may take their clients' difficulties home (Lee, Lim, Yang, & Lee, 2011). Thus, competence in other-focused EI may, in some contexts, mean being incompetent in self-focused EI and vice versa. Based on the above mentioned reasons, positive associations of EI with health criteria (Martins et al., 2010) may be reflective of self-focused EI because this directly addresses one's own mood state. By contrast, the positive associations of EI with social criteria (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Lopes et al., 2004) may be more reflective of other-focused EI because this directly addresses the mood state of other individuals.

1.2. Emotion appraisal and emotion regulation

As we aim for a short and practical instrument to reliably differentiate between emotional processes, EI will be captured by two main dimensions that are theoretically relevant and consistently appear in every conceptual model of EI, namely, emotion appraisal and emotion regulation (e.g., Davies, Stankov, & Roberts, 1998; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Petrides et al., 2007). We argue that emotion appraisal and regulation play crucial roles in the way individuals deal with emotions. In the first part of the process, emotion appraisal may draw one's attention to the emotion without altering its impact. In the second part of the process, the emotion is regulated to facilitate mood or social interaction. Thus, one could infer that emotion appraisal functions as a precondition for emotion regulation (cf. Joseph & Newman, 2010); however, emotion appraisal does not always have to result in emotion regulation. Based on an individual's capacity, motivation, and the context, different reactions might follow.

EI models and instruments vary considerably in the precise composition of the EI dimensions included (Siegling et al., 2015). However, the different interpretations of the construct complement rather than contradict each other (Ciarrochi, Chan, & Caputi, 2000). Moreover, the distinction between emotion appraisal and emotion regulation maps well onto the distinction between emotion generation and emotion regulation in the basic emotion regulation literature (Gross, Sheppes, & Urry, 2011), which suggests that it might function as an appealing framework for conceptualizing the process of dealing with emotions.

1.3. The present studies

The aim of the present studies was to develop and validate a self-reported EI instrument that captures emotion appraisal and emotion regulation. When combining these EI dimensions with a focus on either the self or the other, four dimensions emerged. We suggest that this simple yet intuitive distinction can help gain additional insights into emotional processes. Although several validated instruments that distinguish self- from other-focused EI dimensions have previously been developed, these tests have their limitations. They lack an explicit other-focused emotion regulation dimension (Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS): Wong & Law, 2002) or their items and subscales can empirically and statistically only be differentiated in two defensible factors (PEC; Brasseur et al., 2013). In developing a scale that is balanced in its focus on self- and other-emotions and that comprises the two main dimensions of EI, we aim to facilitate empirical research on the working mechanisms that underlie the manifestation of EI.

2. Study 1: scale development and factorial structure

In study 1, the factorial validity of a new scale was examined to measure self- and other-focused EI: the Rotterdam Emotional Intelligence Scale (REIS). In line with its theoretical background, the hypothesis was that the REIS follows a four-factorial structure that consists of self-focused emotion appraisal, other-focused emotion

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