

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS A CONCEPT AND AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

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Abstract. The purpose of the article is to clarify, on the one hand, the origin of the concept of emotional intelligence and the leading models in the theory. The performed retrospective is motivated by the need to justify the statement that emotions are essential in the life and work of the individual. The sources cited in the report prove that emotional intelligence is not a modern paradigm but a concept with a deep history. On the other hand, the authors aspire to link the competencies of emotional intelligence with entrepreneurial learning and hence with entrepreneurial intention. Based on a content analysis of research conducted in recent years among students and entrepreneurs, the main conclusions support the essential training in emotional intelligence in specialities related to entrepreneurship.

Keywords: emotional intelligence; education; entrepreneurial intention; entrepreneurship

1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI), as a term, became part of psychology and neuroscience at the end of the 20th century. Still, as a concept, many researchers also found it in the works of ancient philosophers. The factors falling under the scope of EI were first touched upon in the research of the so-called social intelligence (SI), which, purely historically as a term in the literature, is considered to have arisen earlier. Subsequently, EI and SI as separate concepts were combined into the broader term emotional and social intelligence (Atre). Therefore, the main theories and leading models are often intertwined.

Generally speaking, emotional intelligence is associated with knowing when and how an individual should express their emotions and how to control them. The ability to manage feelings and thereby reduce stress is another aspect of EI essential for success. Currently, there are relatively few studies on the relationship between emotional intelligence, entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Some studies have found that entrepreneurial passion mediates the relationship be-

tween self-efficacy and resilience, indicating that emotion is essential in entrepreneurship (Wen 2020; Pavlov 2023).

This report aims to trace the origins of the EI concept and justify the need to introduce EI training to students. The following tasks have been defined: (1) tracing the origins of the concept of emotional intelligence; (2) deriving the basic models for emotional intelligence; (3) presenting findings from research among students and entrepreneurs on the relevance of EI to entrepreneurial intention; (4) formulating conclusions.

2. Origin of the Concept of Emotional Intelligence

The earliest texts cited as the basis for developing the theory of emotional intelligence concentrate on the individual's emotions and their impact if they are (or are not) regulated in an acceptable (reasonable) way. It is impossible to cover all the authors and researchers who contributed to the origin and confirmation of the EI concept. Nevertheless, an attempt will be made to give a brief retrospective:

It is not without reason that Aristotle (384 – 322 BC) can be cited as a pioneer who, in his work, *Nicomachean Ethics*, explores the challenge of exercising emotional life with the help of the intellect (Minkova 2020). In the history of philosophy, emotions are most often seen as bodily reactions beyond our control. An opposite position is found in the works of Aristotle, according to whom most feelings are active and respectively contain cognitive elements. In the *Eudemean Ethics*, emotions are discussed from the point of view of their significant role in the formation of character and that of the virtues, and in *Rhetoric*, emotions are primarily a matter of mental causality, i.e. how they influence and change people's judgments (Yazıcı 2015), which is in line with contemporary theories of EI.

In 1872, in his work *The Expression of Emotions in Humans and Animals*, Charles Darwin revealed the importance of emotional self-expression for survival and adaptation (Minkova 2020). Darwin reasoned that human facial expressions reflect emotions, some part from our primal state, some from habit, but most are universal and controlled by an involuntary nervous system. The latter was first described by Charles Bell in 1806 in *Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression* and later became known as the parasympathetic system (Hughes 2022).

In 1909 John Dewey, a philosopher, first used the term social intelligence in the sense of the strength of observing and comprehending social situations (Atre). Also, at the beginning of the last century, the American psychologist and researcher Edward Thorndike, with the concept of social intelligence, described the ability to understand and drive people (Socialigence).

The influence of non-intellectual factors on a person's ability to succeed in life was predicted in the 1940s by one of the founders of modern clinical psychology, David Wechsler, who emphasised as the central question whether the non-intellectual, i.e. affective and conative abilities, are permissible factors of general in-

telligence. According to Wechsler, such factors are not only permissible but also necessary, and he tries to prove that, in addition to intellectual factors, certain non-intellectual factors determine intelligent behaviour. The author also argues that it is impossible to measure general intelligence until specific criteria of non-intellectual factors are included in the tests (Cherniss 2000).

Sandeep Atre, an expert on emotional and social intelligence, in his study, identifies Michael Beldoch, a clinical professor of psychology in psychiatry at Cornell University, as the person who first used the term emotional intelligence in a study on Sensitivity to Expression of Emotional Meaning in Three Modes of Communication since 1964 Two years later, the term is also found in an article by the German psychiatrist Hanscarl Leuner, entitled Emotional intelligence and emancipation.

In 1975, Claude Steiner published his concept of emotional literacy, a term synonymous with emotional intelligence. Steiner explains emotional literacy (EL) as understanding one's feelings and those of others to optimise relationships with them. EL enables constructive interaction with others, resulting in the ability to behave rationally or reasonably in emotional situations. The author of the EL concept defines its five main elements: awareness of feelings; sympathy; emotional control skills; coping with emotional difficulties; emotional interactivity (Mitre 2021).

In 1983 Howard Gardner's book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* was published, in which the author formulated his theory that, in addition to classical intellectual ability, people also possess various other types of intelligence: musical, interpersonal, etc. He differentiated intelligence into specific modalities rather than seeing intelligence as dominated by one general ability. It identifies eight modalities, including logical, visual, intrapersonal and interpersonal, the latter two being closely related to what we now call emotional intelligence and, more broadly, social intelligence (Henderson, Gerson & Woodward 2018).

Two years later (1985), Wayne Leon Payne wrote his doctoral dissertation *A Study of Emotion: Developing Emotional Intelligence; Self-Integration; Relating to Fear, Pain and Desire*, which until recently was thought to be the first time the term "emotional intelligence" was used. Payne begins his scholarly work by emphasising in the first sentence that he introduces the concept of Emotional Intelligence, a hitherto neglected capacity for consciousness (Bar-On 2006). The dissertation is not distributed in electronic form, i.e. remains the domain of a narrower public circle, and Payne does not establish himself as the "father" of the concept of EI. Another term used by him is of interest – emotional ignorance, which, according to the author, leads to the suppression of emotions and the limitation of emotional growth, and many of the problems that modern societies face, such as depression, addiction, diseases, religious conflicts, violence, wars, are precisely the direct result of emotional ignorance.

In the same year, Reuven Bar-On, an Israeli psychologist and one of the leading theorists and researchers in the field of EI, introduced the concept of Emotional

Quotient (EQ) to measure emotional and social intelligence. According to the Bar-On model, emotional-social intelligence can be viewed as a cross-section of inter-related emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that account for how effectively we understand and express ourselves, how successfully we comprehend and communicate with others and, accordingly, how we deal with daily challenges (Socialigence).

In 1990 Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer published Emotional Intelligence – an article that introduces to the world EI as a set of skills that authors hypothesised to influence the accurate assessment, the expression, and the regulation of one’s own and other’s emotions and the directing of the awareness feelings toward motivating, planning and achieving goals of a different nature (Socialigence; Kostadinova 2019).

In the mid-1990s, the psychologist, journalist and writer Daniel Goleman published his bestseller *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (1995), which played a vital role in popularising the EI concept. After the publication of his other remarkable book *Social Intelligence – The New Science of Human Relationships* (2006), the mixed concept of emotional and social intelligence became official (Cherry 2023). According to him, a highly emotionally intelligent person is able to hear his inner voice and successfully identify his feelings, pays attention not only to sound logic but also to his intuition, and uses analytics to unravel his own emotions and the feelings of others.

More recent (after 2000) studies of EI include the works of Petrides and Furnham, who define EI as a constellation of emotional self-perception whose place they define at the lower levels of personality hierarchies. The main focus of their work is the theory that EI is not a cognitive ability but a set of personality traits relating to people’s perceptions of their emotional abilities (Petrides 2010).

2009 Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves release the book *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, making the EI concept even more popular and with ever more comprehensive practical application. They identify four emotional skills – self-awareness, self-control, social awareness, and relationship management, grouped into two primary competencies: personal and social competence. (Bradberi & Griyvs 2019, p. 36).

3. Emotional Intelligence Models

Based on the multitude of theories and concepts, researchers form three main models of EI (Wen 2020):

3.1. Personality Trait

Petrides and Furnham develop the model and cover 15 specific elements (Kostadinova 2019): adaptability, assertiveness, emotion expression, emotion management, emotion perception, emotion regulation, impulsivity, relationships, self-esteem, self-motivation, social awareness, stress management, empathy,

happiness, optimism, disposition, well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability and global emotional intelligence, which is a combination of all 15 dimensions (see Fig. 1). Petrides & Furnham support the thesis that EI is not ability and define it as a constellation of emotionally interconnected subjective perceptions and beliefs of the person about the stability of his qualities, through which he controls and regulates his emotions.

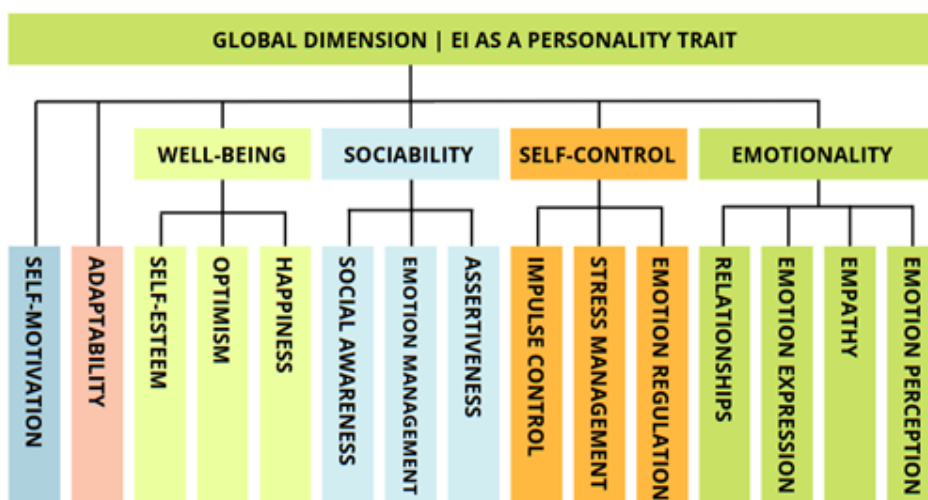


Figure 1. Structure of EI as a personality trait according to the TEIQue model (adapted by the authors from Rahimi 2021).

3.2. Cognitive Ability

Salovey and Mayer developed a model in which they consider emotional intelligence part of social intelligence and form the so-called four-pillar model (Kostadinova & Ahmedova 2019) of EI, composed of perceiving, using, understanding and managing emotions (see Fig. 2). This includes the ability to monitor one's and others' emotions, distinguish between them, and use the resulting information to guide the thoughts and actions of others. I.e. they define social intelligence as the ability to use emotional intelligence in social situations (Socialigence);

3.3. Mixed Models

According to Representatives Bar-On and Goleman, EI is an ability that can be acquired and a personality characteristic that can develop over time. In his first publications, Goleman defines five competencies (clusters) - self-awareness (including emotional self-awareness, accurate self-evaluation and self-esteem), self-regulation (self-control, reliability, conscientiousness, adaptability and innovation), self-motivation (contains orientation, activity, initiative and achievement optimism), of em-

pathy (general empathy, organisational awareness, service orientation, developing others and using diversity) and social skills/habits (cooperation building, leadership, communication, influence, change catalyst, conflict management, collaboration and intra-team capabilities) (Kostadinova 2019; Filipu 2019).

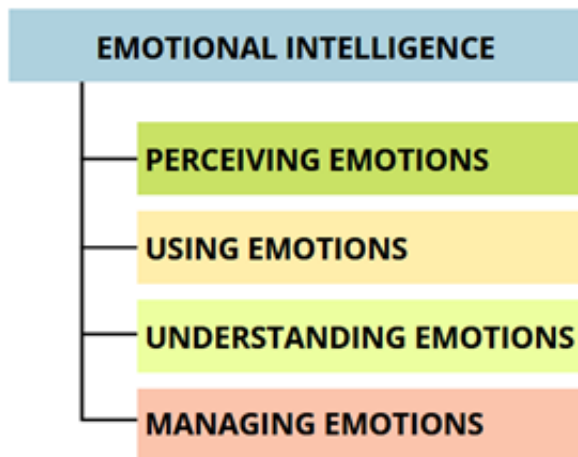


Figure 2. Mayer & Salovey’s four-pillar model of EI (Source: authors).

At a later stage, Goleman redesigns the five domains model into four components model of EI (see Fig. 3): self-awareness, self-management (or self-regulation), and social and relationship awareness (Ott).

Bar-On’s model of emotional intelligence is more about performance potential than the performance itself; it is process oriented rather than outcome-oriented. According to Bar-On, EI focuses on (1) a group of emotional and social skills and (2) the ability to cope and adapt. Initially, the combined model he proposed represents the 15-factor structure of the Bar-On model and the 13 factors that emerged as a result of the exploratory factor analysis. Later, the researcher conducted a second analysis that determined a 10-factor structure: self-esteem, interpersonal relationships, impulse control, problem-solving, emotional self-awareness, flexibility, reality testing, stress resistance, assertiveness, and empathy. These ten components are also identified as key to emotional-social intelligence. As it became apparent at the beginning of development, it is increasingly tied to existing models of emotional intelligence (Bar-On 2006).

The derived theoretical models aim to establish the elements (components, competencies, dimensions) of emotional intelligence related to the perception, recognition, use and management of one’s own and others’ emotions. EI models should be identified to develop different and correct instruments to assess the construct of EI. Each theoretical paradigm conceptualises emotional intelligence

from a different perspective: ability, trait, or mixed model. In the first (ability) model, EI is taken as a form of mental ability and, therefore, as pure intelligence. The second concept – EI as a set of personality traits refers to individual perceptions of an individual’s emotional abilities. Mixed models of emotional intelligence combine mental capacity with personality traits.

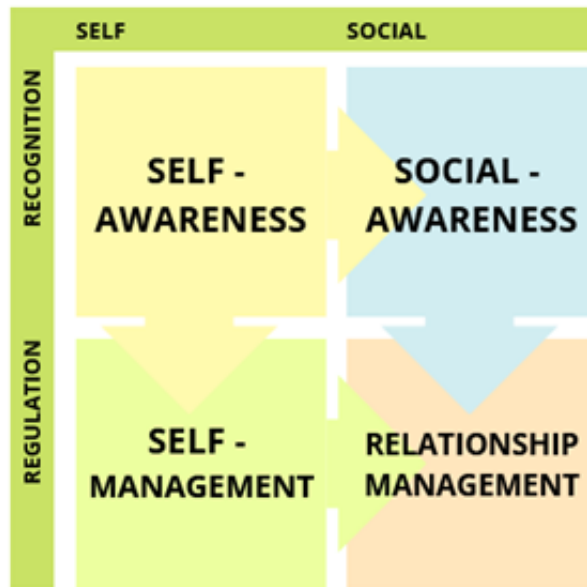


Figure 3. Daniel Goleman’s Model of EI with 4th Competencies included (Source: authors).

4. Emotional Intelligence as an Essential Element in Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship research recognises the entrepreneur as the catalyst of the new venture process. A popular stream of research that has not yet been applied enough to entrepreneurship is the study of the emotional intelligence of entrepreneurs and leaders. In a large-scale survey by Rhee and White (2007), participating entrepreneurs demonstrated high levels of assertiveness, trustworthiness, achievement orientation, service orientation, change catalyst, teamwork, and cooperation. The authors found that trustworthiness, or what they described as the ability to maintain standards of honesty and integrity, ranked highest among a total of 18 emotional competencies measured. The importance of teamwork and collaboration in the process of a new venture is also highlighted in the findings of the scientists. Undoubtedly social competence, emotional intelligence and communication competence

are interdependent (Venelinova 2021), and that is why good communication, not only rational intellect, determines the quality and sustainability of social interaction and success.

An earlier study revealed a more distant but no less significant relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurship. After conducting empirical research, it is proven that studying the EI aspects helps students develop entrepreneurial traits. The study also analysed the relationship of EI with entrepreneurship by including factors such as self-concept, self-control, social awareness and relationship management. The authors conclude that the individual's characteristics are significant for developing entrepreneurship, such as the need for achievement, internal control, propensity to risk, and self-reliance. At the same time, they prove that the development of entrepreneurship is directly related to the individual's ability to analyse and control his emotions and values and to influence another person's feelings. Therefore, it can be assumed that EI is an essential construct for developing entrepreneurship, shaping an individual's entrepreneurial attitudes through his proactivity and creative characteristics (Zakarevičius and Župerka 2010).

Summarising the results obtained from their research on Lithuanian students, Zakarevičius and Župerka find that analysing an individual's emotions and values is vital for developing an entrepreneurship intention. The expression of values is also an emotional aspect and finds expression in the perception of what is acceptable and unacceptable for the individual. At the same time, value orientation is essential for developing personal motivation when developing individual entrepreneurship in the context of emotional attitude. Suppose the accepted behaviour of the individual contradicts his values, and the person experiences negative emotions. In that case, this frustrates the creativity and internal motivation of the individual in his attempts to realise the task set by himself or another person. That gives reason to the authors to argue that in parallel with the entrepreneurial training of the students, their EI should be developed by increasing the self-perception of the importance of emotional self-efficacy.

Kanonuhwa et al. (2018) also consider entrepreneurship an emotional process. The concept is becoming increasingly popular among scientists and politicians worldwide. The dynamism in the work environment has increased opportunities for new entrepreneurial initiatives, making self-employment lucrative. The authors are convinced that implanting entrepreneurial intention in students' minds will help build future entrepreneurial behaviour and a proactive generation.

Similarly, according to Kwapisz et al. (2021), increasing students' entrepreneurial mindset should be among the main goals of entrepreneurship education, which is increasingly being taught in many educational institutions. If the purpose of an academic program is to build future and successful entrepreneurs interested in starting new ventures, the authors' findings suggest that programs focused on interest, creativity, and the use (direction) of emotions may be most valuable.

A study of 529 Chinese college students specifically examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. The results show a significant positive correlation between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and emotional intelligence: (1) as students' emotional intelligence level improves, entrepreneurial self-efficacy increases; (2) the higher the emotional intelligence, the more stable the entrepreneurial self-efficacy. The university stage is considered an ideal entrepreneurial period, especially for students who pay more attention to entrepreneurship and innovation studies. Encouraging the cultivation of students' emotional intelligence helps to improve personal entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Wen 2020).

From the point of view of practice, in recent years, the role of vocational education in the development of the social economy has been increasingly emphasised. Educational institutions must promote innovative teaching and learning through modern pedagogical approaches (Kostadinova & Kunev 2021), including disciplines that develop self-efficacy, creativity and social skills. In Bulgarian educational institutions, entrepreneurship training has traditions, but it is essential to be restructured and modernized. It is crucial to create an environment that encourages the effective expression and use of emotions to develop emotional intelligence and stimulate entrepreneurial attitudes in the next generations of students. The present material aims to bring to the fore a relatively underestimated opportunity for building a proactive society striving for positive change and solving significant problems, namely entrepreneurial education based on emotions and values.

5. Conclusions

Although the concepts of emotional intelligence unfold in different directions, they all start from one common point – emotions, and draw a similar conclusion: emotionally ignorant people experience severe difficulties in realising their goals, achieving success, or even communicating fully. In contrast, emotionally literate individuals are characterised by confidence and the use of the right strategies and tools that help them regulate their emotionality and achieve high results, the latter being weakly related to their rational intelligence.

There are certainly a number of other scientific works, theories and models on the question of what emotional intelligence is and its most distinctive characteristics. Moreover, interest in the subject is growing, and EI is increasingly used in organisational management theory. The present study demonstrates that the idea of the power of emotions and control over them can be found in ancient philosophers and researchers. Since the time of Aristotle, the rational intellect has been seen as insufficient for an individual's success and survival, and the knowledge, control and proper expression of emotions have been seen as vital to attaining a fulfilling life.

To a large extent, the conclusion formulated in the previous paragraph explains

why people with mediocre skills and knowledge often rise much faster and at the expense of individuals with proven competencies but weaker emotional and social intelligence. It is necessary to balance the two essential aspects of intelligence – emotional and rational.

Several studies revealed a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurship. Empirical researches prove that studying the EI aspects helps students develop entrepreneurial traits. One of the main conclusions is that entrepreneurship development is directly related to the individual's ability to analyse and control his emotions and values and to influence another person's feelings. Therefore, it can be assumed that EI is an essential construct for developing entrepreneurship, shaping an individual's entrepreneurial attitudes through his proactivity and creative characteristics.

Likewise, prioritising cultivating students' entrepreneurial mindset should be a primary objective within entrepreneurship education, a subject gaining prominence across numerous educational establishments. Should an academic curriculum aim to nurture prospective and accomplished entrepreneurs inclined towards launching new enterprises, the outcomes of the authors' research propose that programs emphasising curiosity, innovation, and adeptness in navigating emotions could hold the utmost significance.

In addition, the dynamic nature of the contemporary work environment has expanded avenues for novel entrepreneurial endeavours, rendering self-employment enticing. The authors are convinced that building entrepreneurial intent in students' minds through EI will foster forthcoming entrepreneurial actions and a forward-thinking generation. And the latter is imperative for any thriving economy.

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