Assessing emotional intelligence: reliability and validity of the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) in university students

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Abstract

The study examined reliability and validity of a new measure of emotional (i.e. non-cognitive) intelligence, the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i; Bar-On, 1997, in a sample of 243 university students. Results indicated that the EQ-i domain and component scales had good item homogeneity and internal consistency. Scores were not unduly affected by response styles or biases. The EQ-i scales had a meaningful pattern of convergent validities with respect to measures of normal personality, depression, somatic symptomatology, intensity of affective experience and alexithymia. The reliability and validity results for men and women were very similar. Overall, the results suggested that the EQ-i is a promising measure of emotional intelligence. We recommend strategies for further validation of the EQ-i, as well as the construct of emotional intelligence. © 2000 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a relatively new term for a construct that is aimed at complementing the traditional view of intelligence by emphasizing the emotional, personal, and social contributions to intelligent behavior (Gardner, 1983; Mayer & Salovey, 1993, 1995;

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Wechsler, 1940, 1943, 1958). Recently, the concept was popularized by Goleman (Goleman, 1995) and researchers undertook efforts to develop self-report measures of emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 1997; Schutte, Malouff, Hall, Haggery & Cooper, 1998). One of the most active researchers in the area is Bar-On, whose work culminated in the publication of the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i; Bar-On, 1997).

The EQ-i is a 133-item self-report inventory. Items are declarative statements phrased in the first-person singular. Respondents are asked to indicate the degree to which the statement accurately describes them on a 5-point scale (1 = *not true of me*, 5 = *true of me*). Items are

Table 1
EQ-i composite scales and subscales[a]

Composite/subscale	Description of subscale: ability to...
EQ-i total (TOTAL)	
Intrapersonal (INTRA)	
Emotional self-awareness (ES)	Recognize and understand one's feelings
Assertiveness (AS)	Express feelings, beliefs and thoughts and defend one's rights in a non-destructive manner
Self-regard (SR)	Be aware of, understand, accept, and respect oneself
Self-actualization (SA)	Realize one's potential capacities
Independence (IN)	Be self-directed and self-controlled in one's thinking and actions and to be free of emotional dependency
Interpersonal (INTER)	
Empathy (EM)	Be aware of, to understand, and to appreciate the feelings of others
Interpersonal relationship (IR)	Establish and maintain mutually satisfying relationships that are characterized by emotional closeness and by giving and receiving affection
Social responsibility (SR)	Demonstrate oneself as a cooperative, contributing, and constructive member of one's social group
Adaptation (ADAPT)	
Problem solving (PS)	Identify and define problems as well as to generate and implement potentially effective solutions
Reality testing (RT)	Assess the correspondence between what is subjectively experienced and what objectively exist
Flexibility (FL)	Adjust one's emotions, thoughts, and behavior to changing situations and conditions
Stress management (STRES)	
Stress tolerance (ST)	Withstand adverse events and stressful situations without 'falling apart' by actively and positively coping with stress
Impulse control (IC)	Resist or delay an impulse, drive, or temptation to act
General mood (MOOD)	
Happiness (HA)	Feel satisfied with one's life, to enjoy oneself and others, and to have fun
Optimism (OP)	Look at the brighter side of life and to maintain a positive attitude, even in the face of adversity

[a] Subscale descriptions are based on Bar-On (Bar-On, 1997; pp. 44–47).