



Does a self-report measure for emotional intelligence assess something different than general intelligence?

Jan Derksen *, Ingrid Kramer, Michael Katzko

*Department of Clinical Psychology and Personality, University of Nijmegen,
PO Box 9104, 6500 HE Nijmegen, The Netherlands*

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Abstract

One of the theoretical claims made regarding the concept of emotional intelligence is that it concerns a range of human abilities which are independent of the more familiar concept of intellectual ability. This study was conducted to evaluate the divergent validity of Bar-On's EQ-i as compared to the General Adult Mental Ability scale (GAMA), a measure of fluid intelligence. In a Dutch subject sample ($n = 873$), results indicated that the correlations between the EQ-i and the GAMA were very low, for both the total sample as well as for the sexes separately. These findings indicate that the two tests are psychometrically independent, in that the EQ-i is measuring something other than the GAMA. There were also some small age-related changes in the correlations between the EQ-i and GAMA. These results replicate and elaborate those reported by Bar-On [Bar-On, R. (1997). *Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory: technical manual*. Toronto: Multi Health Systems]. © 2001 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

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1. Introduction

The history of research on intelligence has made it clear that a person's success in career and personal life depends not only on IQ but also on other personal factors. It was believed by both experts and laypersons that the concept of intelligence encompasses social and/or emotional factors as well as the cognitive factors (Cantor & Kihlstrom, 1987; Sternberg, 1985; Thorndike, 1920; Wechsler, 1943).

As early as 1920, Thorndike proposed a model of intelligence which included not only the traditional intellectual factors, but also to what he called social intelligence, defined as '...the

* Corresponding author. Fax: +31 24 3607808.

E-mail address: derksen@psych.kun.nl (J. Derksen).

ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls — to act wisely in human relations' (1920, p.228). Thorndike's definition of social intelligence has a cognitive and a behavioral component and implies the following. First, the ability to understand and manage people is an intellectual capacity. Second, this capacity is different from the abstract-verbal and concrete-mechanical aspects of intelligence.

A great deal of attention has since been given to the concept of social intelligence. For years the central question has been whether a unique empirically coherent domain of social intelligence could be delineated, or whether social intelligence is only a function of a more general abstract intelligence. Numerous studies were conducted to separate academic from social intelligence but met with only moderate success (Brown & Anthony, 1990; Ford & Tisak, 1983). According to Ford and Tisak (1983) most of these studies (e.g. Hoepfner & O'Sullivan, 1968; Keating, 1978; Tenopyr, 1967; Thorndike & Stein, 1937; Walker & Foley, 1973) were unsuccessful for two reasons. First, it was difficult to define social intelligence, with different researchers having different definitions of the concept. Some definitions emphasized social perception or insight as the key to social intelligence (Chapin, 1939; Walker & Foley, 1973), while others argued that social intelligence is a multidimensional construct (Cantor & Kihlstrom, 1987; Ford & Tisak, 1983; Jones & Day, 1997; Marlowe, 1986; Mayer & Salovey, 1993; O'Sullivan & Guilford, 1975; Wong, Day, Maxwell & Meara, 1995). The second problem has been how to measure social intelligence in a psychometrically valid way. Social intelligence has been assessed by instruments that were designed to measure ability to 'understand others', e.g. social-cognitive skills rather than behaviorally oriented measures. Researchers who failed to separate the two forms of intelligence often used social-cognitive measures in their study. However, it is essential to distinguish between the cognitive and behavioral aspects of social intelligence (Ford & Tisak, 1983).

Given these problems with the concept of social intelligence, analysis turned to other ways of conceptualizing and measuring non-academic intellectual factors. One alternative was the concept of 'emotional intelligence', first introduced in 1990 by Salovey and Mayer, and popularized by Goleman (1995). This concept has its roots in Wechsler's (1940, 1943) thought of 'non-intellective factors of general intelligence'. Leeper (1948) subsequently used this concept, assuming that 'emotional thoughts' are part of and contribute to 'logical thought' and to intelligence in general. Since then, there was no further work on emotional intelligence for about 40 years until Howard Gardner (1983) developed his Multiple Intelligence Theory which combines cognitive with emotional aspects of intelligence. The Multiple Intelligence Theory consists of seven independent types of intelligence, one of which is 'Personal Intelligence'. Personal Intelligence can be divided into 'Intrapersonal Intelligence', the knowledge of one's internal processes and feelings and 'Interpersonal Intelligence', the ability to determine other people's reactions, needs, emotions and intentions.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) define emotional intelligence as a type of social intelligence which involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions. They distinguish six components of emotional intelligence: emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, empathy, interpersonal relationships, stress tolerance and impulse control. These six components can also be found in Bar-On's concept of emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 1997). Bar-On defines emotional intelligence as 'an array of noncognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures'. According to Bar-On, emotional intelligence is an important factor in determining one's ability to succeed in life and has a direct

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