

## The problem of the development of emotional intelligence of future social educators

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the development problem of the emotional intelligence of future social educators in line with the views of future social educators. This research was designed in accordance with the qualitative research method. The study group of the research consisted of 40 pre-service teachers studying in the department of social studies teaching at a university in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in the 2021–2022 academic year. Research data were collected with a semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers. As a result of the research, it has been determined that the majority of teacher candidates have a medium level of emotional intelligence. The majority of teacher candidates show behaviours that show high emotional intelligence. They expressed it as knowing which emotions and why, understanding the emotions of the people around them, empathising with the people around them, being able to control their own emotions and expressing their own emotions only when they want. The pre-service teachers who participated in the research evaluated the barriers to the development of emotional intelligence in three categories: family barriers, personal barriers and environmental barriers. In line with the results of the research, the necessity of organising seminars that can be guided by emphasising the importance of emotional intelligence for future social educators has emerged.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, development of emotional intelligence, future educators;

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## 1. Introduction

Emotions based on emotional intelligence guide learning, decision-making, creativity, relationships and health (Susanto, Rozali, & Agustina, 2019). Creating a healthier, more equitable, productive and self-sacrificing society for today and future generations can only be possible with leaders with developed emotional intelligence. The welfare and sustainability of the society depend on the wise use of each individual's emotions (Elci & Kuloglu, 2019; Uzunboylu & Evram, 2017). Individuals with emotional intelligence can become happier, healthier, more compassionate and more effective. With this awareness, it is necessary to carry out the science and application of emotional intelligence decisively.

### 1.1. Theoretical and conceptual framework

Emotional intelligence includes emotional abilities such as describing and expressing emotions correctly, integrating emotions into cognitive processes, understanding emotions and understanding the effects of emotions on various situations (Law, Wong, & Song, 2004). The concept of emotional intelligence began to come to the fore with people failing in real life, despite being successful in other intelligence areas, and it was believed that one of the important reasons for these failures was the low level of emotional intelligence in these individuals (Cumming, 2005). Emotional intelligence has been defined as 'a sub-dimension of social intelligence that includes the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to distinguish between them, and to use this information in their thoughts and actions' (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Emotional intelligence is seen as a key to success in working life. Superior success is achieved with emotional competencies beyond cognitive competencies. When we look at the characteristics of individuals who provide this in business life, not those with high cognitive intelligence or more technical knowledge, it is seen that they are emotionally mature people who can communicate well with their colleagues and are prone to teamwork. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are more successful in making decisions and implementing these decisions. An individual's harmony with his/her environment and colleagues always stands out. Individuals with high emotional intelligence stay away from anxiety in business and other social environments (Bar-On, 2006). If we look at the definition of emotional intelligence, the management of emotions is accepted as an important component of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is the understanding of what emotions mean and the relationships between them. At the same time, one's feelings is also defined as using it in problem-solving, understanding the cause of something and at the same time increasing cognitive activities (Yoo, Matsumoto, & LeRoux, 2006).

Emotional intelligence is managing and being aware of one's own feelings and emotions, being sensitive and influencing others, strengthening one's own motivation and keeping one's motivation in balance and directing it carefully. Being able to regulate one's own and others' emotions well, cope with environmental pressures and regulate non-cognitive skills, abilities and competencies are also characteristics of emotional intelligence (Afzalur Rahim & Minors, 2003). If pre-service teachers can use their emotional intelligence efficiently, they will have the capacity to understand, express and control the student groups and other individuals they are in communication with. From this point of view, being conscious of their own awareness, controlling their emotions and using these emotions for positive environments will benefit them in their education life (Fuimano, 2004).

Being aware of the emotional intelligence that exists in the individual allows him/her to solve both his/her own problems and problems in social life (Justice & Espinoza, 2007). In this way, the individual will be able to adapt to new environments more easily. The importance of this concept, especially in teacher education, comes to the fore once again (Pursun & Efiltili, 2019). Emotional intelligence is a skill that can be learned and developed at every educational level. Developing teacher candidates in this field will affect their adaptation to university life and their social relations (Tok & Morali, 2009). When they start the teaching profession, they will continue their professional lives as effective teachers, thanks to this skill they have acquired during their university education (Wenn, Mulholland, Timmons, & Zanker, 2018). Raising individuals with advanced emotional intelligence levels from university education will enable pre-service teachers to prepare environments that improve their emotional intelligence skills in their classrooms when they start their profession (Celik & Gungor, 2020).

### *1.2. Related research*

When the studies conducted in the field are examined, it is seen that many studies have been conducted on the effect of emotional intelligence on the academic success of teachers, teacher candidates and students, adaptation to life, personality formation and its relationship with various variables (Engelberg & Sjöberg, 2004; Gursimsek, Ekinci, & Selcioglu, 2008; Humphrey, Curran, Morris, Farrell, & Woods, 2007; Ishak, Jdaitawi, Ibrahim, & Mustafa, 2011; Jung & Chung, 2012; Kirimoglu, Yeniad, & Shepherd, 2014; Koçoglu, 2011; Perera & DiGiacomo, 2015; Pinarcik, Sali, & Altindis, 2016).

In the study of Yesilyaprak (2001), titled 'Emotional Intelligence: A Variable Determining Job Performance', he gave the following three competence areas that determine excellence: 1) academic intelligence, 2) expertise and 3) emotional intelligence. In the research, emotional intelligence influences the performance of the individual in business life. It has been stated that academic intelligence is a determining and important variable according to expertise. In their study, Gulluce and Iscan (2010) aimed to examine the relationship between professional burnout and emotional intelligence and to make some practical inferences from this relationship. In the study, it was revealed that there is an inverse relationship between professional burnout and emotional intelligence at the end of the applications made on 122 managers.

Caruso, Mayer, and Salovey (2002) used the multi-factor emotional intelligence scale in their study with 180 university students, 52 female and 128 male, based on the question of whether emotional intelligence is a theory of personality or a type of intelligence. As a result of the research, it was determined that emotional intelligence is an area of intelligence that is independent of personality traits. Valente, Veiga-Branco, Rebelo, Lourenço, and Cristóvão (2020) examined whether emotional intelligence skills affect teacher efficacy in their study of emotional intelligence ability and teacher effectiveness. According to the results, it was found that emotional intelligence abilities affect teacher effectiveness positively.

Alam and Ahmad (2018) examined the effect of emotional intelligence on student achievement in the context of school culture in their study named the role of teachers' emotional intelligence in increasing student achievement. In the study handled by Potter (2005), the effect of the emotional intelligence intervention programme applied on 310 first-year university students on the emotional intelligence levels of the students was examined, and as a result, it was determined that the implemented programme provided a positive and significant improvement. In the study handled by Fletcher, Leadbetter, Curran, and O'Sullivan (2009), the effect of the 7-session intelligence training,

which was developed and applied to 36 medical students in the experimental group, on the emotional intelligence levels of the students was examined, and as a result, it was determined that the programme provided a positive improvement in the emotional intelligence skill levels of the students.

In the quasi-experimental study, titled 'Teaching the teachers: emotional intelligence training for teachers', by Hen and Sharabi-Nov (2014), the effect of the 56-hour emotional intelligence training model developed and applied on the teachers in the experimental group on the teachers' emotional intelligence levels was examined and the results determined that there was a significant increase in the emotional intelligence levels of the teachers with the programme applied. In their study, Tmkaya, Hamarta, Deniz, elik, and Aybek (2008) aimed to determine the predictive relationships between university lecturers' emotional intelligence abilities, humour styles and life satisfaction. As a result, it was seen that there was a positive and significant relationship between the emotional intelligence abilities of the instructors, their humour styles and life satisfaction. In their study, Hamarta et al. (2009) aimed to determine whether university students' attachment styles affect their emotional intelligence abilities. It was determined that there was a positive relationship between students' secure attachment style and emotional intelligence abilities, attachment styles significantly predicted emotional intelligence skills and all sub-dimensions of emotional intelligence were linearly affected in the relationship between secure attachment style and emotional intelligence abilities.

### *1.3. Purpose of the research*

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the development problem of the emotional intelligence of future social educators in line with the views of future social educators. In this direction, the following sub-objectives have been determined:

1. What are the views of future social educators on emotional intelligence levels?
2. What are the views of future social educators on high emotional intelligence behaviours?
3. What are the views of future social educators on the barriers to the development of emotional intelligence?

## **2. Methods and materials**

In this section, the method used in the research and the stages of the analysis of the views of future social educators are given.

### *2.1. Research method*

This research was designed in accordance with the qualitative research method. The first stages of qualitative research are the stages of realising the problem and determining the details by analysing the problem. Then, the approach related to the solution of the problem is chosen. After designing the study and completing the data collection process come the classification and analysis of the data. The process is concluded with the stages of interpreting the data and reporting the data (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Considering these stages, the opinions of future social educators on the problem of the development of emotional intelligence were evaluated in accordance with the qualitative research method.

### *2.2. Participants*

The study group of the research consisted of 40 pre-service teachers studying in the department of social studies teaching at a university in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in the 2021–2022 academic year. Teacher candidates participating in the research were selected on a voluntary basis. Of the pre-service teachers forming the study group, 23 were female and 16 were male. 7 of the pre-service teachers were first-year students, 11 of them were second-year students, 10 of them were third-year students and 12 of them were fourth-year students.

### *2.3. Data collection tools*

Research data were collected with a semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers. As required by the semi-structured interview technique, interview questions were prepared for the general purpose and questions of the research. It is important to try the questions prepared in the interview with a group of individuals, to make the necessary changes in expression according to this trial and to write new questions, if necessary. Semi-structured interview questions prepared in this direction were submitted to the examination of two field experts and then applied to three teacher candidates. As a result of the application, a structural change was made in one of the semi-structured interview questions. The questions were converted into forms. In the semi-structured interview form, there are two demographic questions regarding gender and the class they are studying in. There are four questions prepared to evaluate the development problem of emotional intelligence of teacher candidates. The final questions in the semi-structured interview form used in the research are given below.

1. How do you rate your emotional intelligence? Evaluate yourself in one of the very high, high, medium, low or very low categories.
2. What do you think are the behaviours that show high emotional intelligence?
3. What do you think are the barriers to the development of emotional intelligence?

### *2.4. Data collection process*

During the collection of research data, face-to-face interviews were conducted with future social educators. In the interviews, pre-service teachers were asked to answer the questions in the semi-structured interview form. It took approximately 25–30 minutes for the pre-service teachers to answer and complete the questions in the form. It took approximately 3 weeks to complete the interviews with all teacher candidates participating in the research.

### *2.5. Data collection analysis*

In the process of analysing the research data, the content analysis technique, which is mostly used in qualitative research, was used. In content analysis, data obtained through interviews, observations or documents are analysed in four steps. They are coding the data; finding codes, categories and themes; organising the codes, categories and themes; and finally defining and interpreting the findings (Eysenbach & Köhler, 2002). These four stages were followed sequentially and the answers given by the pre-service teachers to the questions in the semi-structured interview form were converted into tables. The answers given by the pre-service teachers to the questions in the form were coded separately by two researchers in the first stage. In the second stage, the answers of the pre-service

teachers were divided into categories. In the third stage, the categories were arranged, and in the last search, they were converted into tables.

### 3. Results

In Table 1, the answers to the question ‘How do you evaluate your emotional intelligence?’ are evaluated.

Table 1. How do you evaluate your emotional intelligence?

Category	F	%
Very High	4	10
High	6	15
Middle	19	47.5
Low	8	20
Very low	3	7.5
<b>Sum</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

In Table 1, the answers to question ‘How do you evaluate your emotional intelligence?’ are categorised. 10% of the teacher candidates stated that they evaluated their emotional intelligence as very high, 15% as high, 47.5% as medium, 20% as low and 7.5% as very low.

In Table 2, the teacher candidates participating in the research were asked, ‘What do you think are the behaviours that show that emotional intelligence is high?’ Their answers to the question are evaluated.

Table 2. What do you think behaviours indicating high emotional intelligence?

Category	F	%
Knowing what emotions you are experiencing and why	32	80
Understanding the emotions of people around	29	72.5
Being able to empathise with the people around	25	62.5
Being able to control your own emotions	21	52.5
Expressing your own feelings only when you want to	17	42.5
To change the mood of the people around in a positive way	13	32.5
To calm the people around	10	25
Being able to influence your own emotions	8	20
Being able to classify their own emotions	5	12.5
Being able to classify the emotions of the people around them	4	10
Understanding the underlying causes of complex emotions	1	2.5

In Table 2, the teacher candidates participating in the research were asked the question ‘What are the behaviours that show that emotional intelligence is high?’ The answers to the question are categorised. 80% of the pre-service teachers answered that they know what emotions they experience and why, 72.5% of them can understand the emotions of the people around them, 62.5% of them can empathise with the people around them and 52.5% of them can control their own emotions. 42.5% of the teacher candidates answered that they can only express their feelings when they want, 32.5% of them can change the mood of the people around them positively, 25% of them can calm the people around them and 20% of them can affect their own emotions. In addition, 12.5% of the pre-service

teachers were able to classify their own emotions, 10% were able to classify the emotions of the people around them and 2.5% understood the underlying causes of complex emotions.

In Table 3, the teacher candidates participating in the research asked the question ‘What do you think are the barriers to the development of emotional intelligence?’ Their answers to the question are evaluated.

Table 3. What do you think are the barriers to the development of emotional intelligence?

Category	Theme	F	%
Familial barriers	Raising a child emotionally weak	33	82.5
	Raising a spoiled child		
	Overly authoritarian parenting		
	Absence of one or more of the parents		
Personal barriers	Domestic violence or abuse	18	45
	Being closed to personal development		
	Lacking the power to regulate mood		
Environmental barriers	Inability to cope with stress	7	17.5
	Friend attitude and orientation		
	Social pressure		
	Tradition		

In Table 3, the teacher candidates’ answers to the question ‘What do you think are the barriers to the development of emotional intelligence?’ are categorised. 82.5% of the teacher candidates stated that there are family barriers to the development of emotional intelligence. Pre-service teachers’ familial barriers are raising the child emotionally weak, raising the child spoiled, an overly authoritarian parental attitude, deprivation of one or more of the parents and domestic violence or abuse. 45% of the teacher candidates stated that there are personal barriers to the development of intelligence. Personal barriers are classified as being closed to personal development, lacking the power to regulate mood and lacking the power to cope with stress. 17.5% of the pre-service teachers stated that there are environmental barriers to the development of emotional intelligence. The environmental barriers are friend attitude and orientation, social pressure and tradition.

#### 4. Discussion

The majority of pre-service teachers who participated in the research stated that their emotional intelligence was at a medium level. In Dutoglu and Tuncel’s (2008) study, it was aimed to determine the relationship between novice teachers’ tendencies towards critical thinking skills and their emotional intelligence levels. According to the questionnaire study applied to 374 fourth-year students from the Faculty of Education at Abant İzzet Baysal University, it was determined that the critical thinking and emotional intelligence levels of the candidate teachers were not high or they were not sufficiently developed. The majority of teacher candidates show behaviours that show high emotional intelligence. They expressed it as knowing which emotions and why, understanding the emotions of the people around them, empathising with the people around them, being able to control their own emotions and expressing their own emotions only when they want.

The pre-service teachers who participated in the research considered the obstacles to the development of emotional intelligence in three categories: familial, personal and environmental

obstacles. Raising the child emotionally weak, raising the child spoiled, excessive authoritarian parenting, deprivation of one or more of the parents and domestic violence or abuse are expressed as family barriers. Being closed to personal development, lacking the power to regulate mood and being unable to cope with stress are expressed as personal barriers. Attitudes and guidance of friends, social pressure and traditions were stated by pre-service teachers as environmental barriers to the development of emotional intelligence.

Harrod and Scheer (2005) examined the relationship between the emotional intelligence of young people and their demographic characteristics. Emotional intelligence scores were compared with the demographic characteristics of individuals (age, gender, family income, education level of parents and place of residence). The results revealed that emotional intelligence was positively associated with women, parents' educational status and family income. Law et al. (2004), in their study, stated that emotional intelligence includes emotional abilities such as understanding and expressing emotions correctly, integrating emotions with cognitive processes, understanding emotions and understanding the effects of emotions on events and situations. Constantine and Gainor (2001) stated in their study that emotional intelligence has a positive relationship with empathy, verbal intelligence and life satisfaction, and individuals with high emotional intelligence have high life satisfaction. In the studies carried out by Ismen (2001) with undergraduate and non-thesis graduate students, a moderate positive relationship was found between emotional intelligence and problem-solving skills.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In many countries today, it is believed that developing and maintaining high-quality education is the key to unlocking the economic and creative potential of society. Therefore, in order to realise a better and more appropriate education, it is necessary to focus on the needs of the period and to update the curriculum. Although it is thought that it is necessary to include both 21st-century skills and emotional intelligence in education programmes, it is stated that teachers have a great share in the development of students' emotional intelligence and in providing them with 21st-century skills. Therefore, in this study, it is aimed to evaluate the development problem of emotional intelligence of future social educators in line with the views of future social educators. As a result of the research, it has been determined that the majority of teacher candidates have a medium level of emotional intelligence. The majority of teacher candidates show behaviours that show high emotional intelligence. They expressed it as knowing which emotions and why, understanding the emotions of the people around them, empathising with the people around them, being able to control their own emotions and expressing their own emotions only when they want. The pre-service teachers who participated in the research evaluated the barriers to the development of emotional intelligence in three categories: family barriers, personal barriers and environmental barriers.

#### **6. Recommendations**

The results obtained from the research necessitated the development of the following suggestions regarding the solution of the problem of emotional development of future social educators:

1. Seminars should be organised for future social educators by emphasising the importance of emotional intelligence and guiding them to educate themselves on this subject.
2. Starting from early childhood education within the education system, course content should be created to develop emotional intelligence.



3. Education programmes that encourage personal development should be established in universities to increase the emotional intelligence levels of future social educators.

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