



## Study of Emotional Intelligence from Childhood to Middle Age

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### ABSTRACT

Given that emotional intelligence is affected by intelligence, emotions, and social relationships and these factors change with age and a few research has been conducted on the development of emotional intelligence, so the aim of this paper is to study development of emotional intelligence in males who are in the ages between 7 to 45 years. The population of this study was all the 7 to 45 years old males in Bandar Lengeh city. 760 (20 per year) participants were selected among them randomly. Data collected by using Bar-On emotional intelligence questionnaire. The results were presented as descriptive graphs and showed that components of emotional intelligence will improve with age but this improvement reach to its peak in the mid of third decade of life and after that it will not experience a big change. According to the findings of the present study, it is a need that adults lend their emotional intelligence abilities to the adolescence in the sophisticated emotional situations.

**Keywords:** emotional intelligence, Childhood, Middle Age

### INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence first defined by Peter Salovey and John Mayer as the ability to process emotional information accurately and efficiently [1, 2, 3]. After that time, numerous researchers [4, 5, 6, and 7] conceptualized about what is emotional intelligence and what elements constitute emotional intelligence.

Mayer et al. [1] definition of EQ is the most famous. They defined emotional intelligence as the ability of perceiving, integrating, understanding, and managing emotions. If you can't perceive what you are feeling, how can you make good choices about jobs, relationships, time management, or even entertainment, Individuals who can perceive and understand emotions in others (usually by reading the nonverbal cues) and respond appropriately are more successful in working with people and often emerge as leaders [8]. If you can't integrate your emotions and understand your own emotions, how can you communicate your feelings to others accurately? Finally you must manage your emotions, particularly negative emotions such as anger or depression. Managing emotions includes the ability to focus energy, persist, control impulses, and delay immediate gratification.

Bar-On [4] propounded a definition about EQ, and because we used Bar-On Scale it is better notice that. "An array of no cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influences one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressure" (p.14).

Researchers agree that emotionally intelligent individuals are able to regulate, as well as accurately perceive and generate, emotional expressions, and that this ability develops across the life span. With the noted exception of Carolyn Saarni, few developmental researchers have specifically addressed the development of emotional intelligence. There is however a substantial body of developmental research detailing how infants and children learn to accurately express, understand, and regulate their emotions, and researchers are becoming increasingly aware of the developmental sequence underlying emotional development. Children learn to express, understand, and regulate their emotions in interactions with their parents, siblings, and peers. Due to the vast diversity of social worlds and individual potential, some children learn to skillfully master emotions of themselves and others, whereas for others, their skills in interpreting emotions are insufficient to achieve success in the social world.

Maltesta et al [9, 10] demonstrated that infants have the capacity to display expressions early in life and that infants' birth status and maternal care characteristics influence this capacity. Infants who have higher rates

of expressivity are more proficient at communicating their feelings and understanding emotional displays of others.

There are gender differences. Mother's communication with boys and girls is different and it can impact on their emotional expressions. Researchers have illustrated that both maternal expressivity and gender of the child are associated with individual differences in expressivity, and that these individual differences are stable over time. Camras et al. [11] found that children who were given clear, no ambiguous emotional messages from their mothers seemed to have developed a greater understanding of emotional expressions than children who received incorrect or ambiguous messages. Researchers have demonstrated that emotional understanding is associated with maternal expressiveness and influences later peer relationships.

Researchers found that younger infants were not able to regulate their emotions. The older children, however, were more skilled and more likely to be able to hide their true (negative) feelings. The ability to regulate emotions becomes more sophisticated during the preschool and early childhood years. Saarni [12] proposed that there were three plausible determinants necessary for the developmental progression of emotional regulation. Specifically, to regulate expressions, children need to have the ability to regulate emotion, knowledge of appropriate action, and motivation to regulate emotions.

Reserchers [12] found that children, regardless of age or audience condition, most frequently reported that they would expect negative interpersonal consequences in response to an expressed negative emotion. They found that younger children reported that they would express sadness and anger more often than older children, and girls reported that they would express sadness and pain more often than boys. The consideration of audience proved to be important to understand the finding. Children regardless of age and gender reported that they would be more likely to control negative emotion expression with a peer than when they were alone or with their mother or father. Mothers and fathers were perceived to be more accepting of expressions of pain and mother were perceived to be more accepting of sadness.

The ability to regulate emotions is proposed to be one of the defining features of emotional intelligence [13, 14]. Despite the plethora of research examining children's development of emotional intelligence regulation, to date, developmental psychologists have not explored the association between children's ability to regulate emotions and their later emotion and intellectual growth. However, psychologist have explored the association between the ability to control desires and later intellectual potential, and this research provides some support for the hypothesis that emotional regulation would be positively associated with emotional and intellectual growth.

In summary, recent work on the development of emotion regulation has demonstrated that infants acquire simple regulatory behaviors within the first year of life and children's regulatory skills become more sophisticated over the first few years of life. During the early school years, children couple their ability to regulate emotion with the knowledge of when to hide negative emotions (such as in social situation) and the motivation to do so. Finally, Michel's work on delay of gratification provides some evidence that ability to successfully regulate emotions may be associated with superior intellectual ability.

Researchers have become increasingly interested in the continuing development of emotional understanding and regulation in adulthood. Labovie-Vief et al. [15] observed improved emotional understanding from preadolescence to midadulthood; this improvement was also associated with individuals' ego level. They concluded that individuals with high verbal ability and ego level described their emotional experiences in a more mature fashion and advocated for a life-span perspective for researchers interested in emotional understanding. Moreover, in a recent article, Carstensen et al. [16] proposed a theory to understand the development of emotional regulation in adulthood. They suggested that emotional and social goals become more salient during adulthood, and thus adults improve their ability to regulate emotions. It may be, however, that enhanced attention to emotional goals is characteristic of emotionally intelligence individuals at all age.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study the population was 7 to 45 year-old-male people in Bandar Lengeh city. 20 participants were randomly selected from each age. People who were literate enough to fill the questionnaire, they did it themselves, but people who were not literate enough to understand the items of the questionnaire (this issue mostly occurred in younger children), the researcher assistants explained items of the questionnaire clearly for them and In cases where children still were unable to answer the questions; The ideas of adults around them such as their parents or teacher were used to answer that items.

It was easy to find the younger participants by going to schools in the city where plenty of eager people wanted to answer the questionnaire. But for older people that it was not possible, enthusiastic and qualified participants were asked to give questionnaires to a few of their peers.

In the end, we had 38 groups there were 20 participants in each one. Then the performance of these groups on the 4 factors of emotional intelligence examined on linear graphs.

We used Bar-On EQ questionnaire. Bar-On [17] reported that the internal consistency reliability of the overall EQ was 0.76. This questionnaire has shown adequate test-retest reliability of 0.85 after 1 month and 0.75 after 4 months [4]. In terms of convergent validity, Gowing [18] reported that the average correlation among EQ subscales was 0.50. In a study [1] the correlation between this EQ questionnaire and the MEIS was 0.36. This

questionnaire assesses 15 component but we needed only 5 components of them: Emotional self- Awareness (Perceiving), Empathy (Understanding), interpersonal Relationship (Integrating), Stress Tolerance and Impulse Control (Managing.)

It should be noted that the scores for each subject on first three factors change between 6 and 30, and the fourth factor varies between 12 and 60. And the range of total subjects' scores on the three prime factors for each age group are between 120 and 600, and the fourth factor is variable between 240 and 1200.

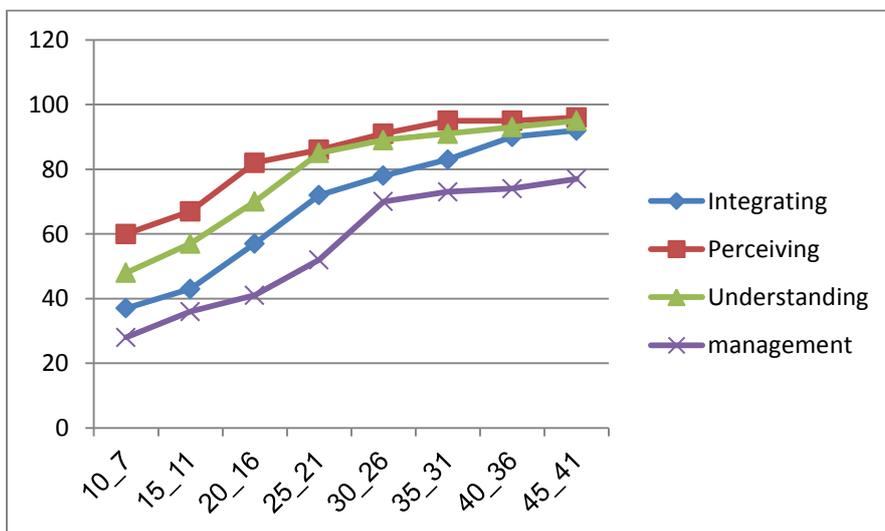
## RESULTS

Due to the long period of age that we considered and also because emotional intelligence's factors doesn't show important changes In a short period of time, these factors are shown on the graphs in these age periods: 7-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45. Because the first period take less ages and because management had a wider range and to allow a better comparison, graphs are presented as a percentage. In other words, each column shows that participants in that age period take what percentage of scores in that factor.

The results are presented in Table 1 as a percentage and each of the components of emotional intelligence plotted on a separate line chart that shows the developmental status of that component. Graphs showed that components of emotional intelligence will improve with age and in all of them maximum changes have occurred between the ages of 11 to 20 years, after it will continue to change, but its slope decreases. Emotional Management component is lower than the other components and that's growth after the age of 30 is impressive.

**Table 1.** Acquisitioned percentage for components

Items	Ages							
	7-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45
Integrating	30	45	57	69	81	86	90	92
Perceiving	60	67	82	86	91	95	95	96
Understanding	48	57	70	85	89	91	93	95
management	28	36	41	52	70	73	74	77



**Figure 1.** Acquisitioned percentage for components

## DISCUSSION

The most likely cause of the change between the ages of 11 to 20 due to development of formal operation abilities. After this age expended social experiences has an additive, slowly effect on enhancing the capabilities of component of emotional intelligence .

The results from the emotional management are also interesting. The chart can be seen that this factor have a lower score than the others. And its slope between the ages of 21 to 30 years old is also high. Part of this could be due to the late development of the prefrontal cortex that is responsible for emotional management [8]. Also more likely to experience greeter social and closed emotional relationships, such as to love and marriage can impact the ability to manage emotions. Given these results, it seems it is a need that adults lend their emotional intelligence abilities to the adolescence in the sophisticated emotional situations.

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