DEVELOPMENT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Simas Garbenis, Renata Geležinienė
Šiauliai University, Lithuania

Greta Šiaučiulytė
Šiauliai Region Association of Social Pedagogues, Lithuania

Abstract

The aim of the study is to analyse teachers' opinion about the development of emotional intelligence in students who have special educational needs in inclusive schools. The method of the questionnaire survey was chosen to achieve the research aim. The study employed two developed questionnaires based on the principle of *Likert* scale (1-5). The questionnaires were developed for teachers according to the parts of the structure of trait emotional intelligence for students aged 7 to 12 and 13 to 17 years. The questionnaires potentially reveal teachers' opinion about several aspects of emotional intelligence development: how and how often teachers assess, organize targeted and non-targeted educational activities for individual parts of the structure of students' emotional intelligence and promote awareness of their importance. After conducting the research, it was found that the development of parts of the structure of emotional intelligence was carried out differently depending on students' age. Differences were recorded both between the developed parts of the structure and between applied educational activities. Both statistically significant and insignificant research data were obtained and it was found that the development of emotional intelligence for younger students was more oriented to their inner self-knowledge; while for older students, to the aspects of socialization.

Keywords: *trait emotional intelligence, structure of emotional intelligence, education of students with special educational needs.*

Introduction

Emotions in people's lives play a very significant role. First, it must be mentioned that emotions manifest themselves constantly and differently. Different reasons and contexts can cause positive or negative emotions determining changes in people's behaviour, the

effectiveness and direction of decision-making, relationship formation, and other aspects of daily life (Siegling, Saklofske, & Petrides, 2015; Salovey, Mayer, & Caruso, 2016). It should be emphasized that emotions, in contrast with feelings, are experienced unconsciously, their manifestation is involuntary, caused by external factors, which makes it almost impossible to conceal them (Pettinelli, 2012). In other words, emotions are an inevitable reflection of the person's state. Having realised the importance of emotions and emotional powers to people's quality of life, the recent decades witnessed a very strong focus on emotional intelligence as a separate construct (Dhani & Sharma, 2016).

Namely emotional intelligence and its structure are those determinants that allow not only to properly perceive one's own and other people's emotions and their consequences but also to properly use that information for various perspectives (Salovey et al., 2014; Petrides & Mavroveli, 2018; Rodrigues & Machado, 2019). Although the functions and main ideas of emotional intelligence do not differ substantially, there are several basic theories and models with different structures (Petrides & Furnham, 2001; Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1995; Salovey et al., 1990): 1) Goleman's theory; 2) Salovey-Mayer-Caruso (*Ability*) theory; 3) Bar-On (*mixed*) theory; 4) Petrides (*trait*) theory. The scientific literature reveals that the biggest difference between these theories of emotional intelligence lies not in their structure but in research instruments (Petrides, 2011; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016). This means that choosing between different theories of emotional intelligence, members of the academic community and other researchers working in the field of emotional intelligence must first consider research instruments. Therefore, the essential theory of the article, which served as a basis for conducting the research participants' survey, was the trait emotional intelligence theory chosen due to several main criteria.

Contrary to other models of emotional intelligence, the structure of the trait model is least debatable with regard to its validity at both the theoretical and empirical levels (Petrides & Mavroveli, 2018). A large amount of scientific research (Dehghanan, Abdollahi, & Rezaei, 2014; Indradevi, 2015; Alegre, Perez-Escoda, & Lopez-Cassa, 2019) reveals that parts of the structure of the said model correlate with the main personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism), which means that this model has clearly defined links not with subjectively understood abilities, experiences as it is in other models but also with a specific structure of the personality (the Big Five personality traits). Other models lack similar substantiation and links because identification of the structure of other models with abilities, competencies, and the like is debatable. Researchers (Locke, 2005; Petrides, 2011; Siegling et al., 2015) question whether other emotional intelligence models can be identified with, for example, abilities or competencies due to their highly abstract structure and lack of integrity. It is also worth mentioning that research based on the trait emotional intelligence model reveals that structure of emotional intelligence which manifests itself in normal everyday conditions. Other models typically measure only the maximum potential of emotional intelligence. This means that the results of the research on trait emotional intelligence reveal not only the aspects of individual parts of the structure of emotional intelligence but also general aspects of its manifestation both under normal life conditions and at the maximum need for its manifestation. Finally, the research instruments of the trait emotional intelligence model measure not only the overall emotional intelligence quotient (EQ) but also various aspects related to success in life (the propensity to certain behaviour forms, mental parameters, individual strengths, etc.). This is so because this model has validated and scientifically grounded research instruments for different age groups, different structures of emotional

intelligence for children, adolescents, and adults. For these reasons, the trait emotional intelligence model is also described as one of the most widely used models for determining potential success in life. Research based on other models of emotional intelligence lacks such variation in research instruments; therefore, most research related to emotional intelligence is conducted with adults or older people (Petrides, 2018; Siegling et al., 2015).

These days, emotional intelligence is often treated as a more important aspect determining success in life than general intelligence. Such a statement is formulated for several reasons. First, emotional intelligence is one of the key indicators in predicting success in life. Scientific research data demonstrate that people with high emotional intelligence are more successful in various aspects of life (relationships, workplace, school, and the like) (Bhootrani & Junejo, 2016; Ozer, Hamarta, & Deniz, 2016). The second reason is the manifestation of emotional intelligence in everyday life and its application in various fields: clinical, educational, organizational, etc. (Petrides & Mavroveli, 2018). This means that the manifestation of emotional intelligence takes place in many different contexts and at all age periods. It can be stated that the development of emotional intelligence is particularly important for students who have special educational needs. As stated by Kumar (2013), students who have special educational needs are inclined to emotional instability. According to the researcher, such students also face emotional problems when learning in inclusive settings: they often compare themselves with other students and assess themselves negatively, find it difficult to concentrate, are unable to express feelings and calm themselves. However, such conditions are favourable for the development of emotional intelligence due to on-going social interactions, different activities, and challenges. Students who have special educational needs and high emotional intelligence distinguish themselves by better academic performance and learning motivation, better planning and problem-solving abilities, a strong sense of friendship, appropriate behaviour, and a positive attitude towards school and learning (Kumar, 2013). Similar insights are provided by Biswal (2015), who states that inclusive education for students who have special educational needs is a great condition for developing their emotional intelligence and exercising their emotional powers.

The development of emotional intelligence in children who have special educational needs in inclusive schools can take place in two ways: through specialized programmes and activities aimed at developing emotional intelligence and by experiencing various emotions during the lessons and interacting with teachers and other students. Scientific research (Taylor, Oberle, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017; Gershon & Pellitter, 2018; Carissoli & Villani, 2019) data reveal that integration of programmes developing social, behavioural, and emotional powers into school curricula results in manifold outcomes. Students who have completed these programmes distinguish themselves by better mental health, social abilities, academic performance, are more positive about themselves, and are less prone to antisocial behaviour and use of harmful habits. It can be assumed that integration of such programmes into the curriculum can have a positive effect on the emotional intelligence of students who have special educational needs. Emotional intelligence can be developed in inclusive schools even when similar targeted programmes are not applied due to constantly experienced different emotions in schools as well as social interactions with teachers and other students during the (self-)educational process. Such links occur constantly: during individual and group work, during breaks, during trips, and the like. Therefore, proper student-teacher communication is of great importance for the manifestation and management of students' emotions (Grams & Jurowetzki, 2015). Teachers' ability to manage students' emotions enables to create

conditions in the classroom, which are favourable not only for teaching but also for learning, allows orientation to target students (including students who have special educational needs), their academic performance, proper communication with classmates, and their emotional powers (Mainhard, Oudman, Horsntra, Bosker, & Goetz, 2018). Such emotional intelligence development programmes and perspectives of communication with teachers are particularly important for students who have special educational needs and learn in inclusive classrooms. It can be stated that in the school context, emotional intelligence can be developed both during its targeted development by applying various specialized programmes and during non-targeted education by interacting and helping to manage emotional powers throughout the whole (self-) educational process.

Relevance of the study is grounded on the conception that emotional intelligence is one of the key factors in creating a successful life. Its development is especially important for students who have special educational needs (due to their emotional sensitivity, frequent social exclusion, and the like). Higher emotional intelligence allows students not only to function more successfully at school but also in other areas of life. For these reasons, it is important to identify how the development of emotional intelligence of students of different ages takes place in inclusive schools.

The research object is the development of emotional intelligence in students who have special educational needs, based on the trait theory.

The research aim is to analyse teachers' opinion about the development of emotional intelligence in students who have special educational needs in inclusive schools.

Problem questions: What parts of the structure of emotional intelligence are most often developed in inclusive schools according to teachers? What educational activities do teachers apply while developing emotional intelligence in students who have special educational needs? Does the development of emotional intelligence differ depending on students' age?

Research methodology and organization

The method of the questionnaire survey was chosen to achieve the aim of the study. During the research, two developed questionnaires formulated according to the trait emotional intelligence theory were applied. The questionnaires were developed for teachers according to the said parts of the structure of emotional intelligence of the said theory for students of two age groups: students aged from 7 to 12 years and students aged from 13 to 17 years. The questionnaires reveal teachers' opinions on several aspects of developing emotional intelligence: 1) how and how often teachers assess individual parts of the structure of students' emotional intelligence; 2) what targeted educational activities for different parts of the structure of students' emotional intelligence teachers organise and how often they organise them; 3) what non-targeted educational activities for different structural parts of students' emotional intelligence teachers organise and how often they organise them; 4) how and how often teachers promote students' awareness of the importance of emotional intelligence and its parts. In order to determine teachers' opinions on the above-mentioned aspects, both questionnaires were designed based on the principle of the Likert scale (1-5). Following this principle, 4 questions are attributed to every structural part of the emotional intelligence, which possibly reveal, for example, how often teachers' assessment, targeted education, non-targeted education, and promotion of awareness of importance were applied to the structural part of emotional intelligence *adaptation*.

The first questionnaire was designed to identify the opinion of teachers educating students

aged 7 to 12 years about the development of students' emotional intelligence. Given that the structure of emotional intelligence of students of this age consists of 9 parts, the questionnaire consisted of 36 items (4 questions for each part of the structure of emotional intelligence). The same principle was applied for compiling the second questionnaire intended for revealing the opinions of teachers working with students aged 13 to 17 years. The emotional intelligence structure of students of this age consists of 15 parts; therefore, 60 items were formed in this questionnaire.

Teachers' opinions about the development of structural parts of emotional intelligence, which are characteristic solely to a certain age group, are assessed without a comparison with the opinions of other teachers (working with children of different ages). Teachers' opinions are compared with each other when characteristic parts of the structure of emotional intelligence (adaptation, expression, perception, regulation of emotions, self-confidence, and self-motivation) are present for both age groups. All items are based on Petrides' and Mavroveli's (2001; 2018) conceptions of the parts of the structure of the trait emotional intelligence theory.

During the research, the following data collection methods were used: 1) the method of the analysis of scientific literature, which was applied to reveal theoretical insights and to form the research design; 2) the questionnaire survey method for collection of empirical research data. Data analysis methods: 1) methods of descriptive mathematical statistics with SPSS 21.0 programme (Mann-Whitney U test, Wilcoxon signed-rank test, standard deviation of the mean).

The study involved 130 teachers-specialists (N=130); 92 (N=92) of them were teachers educating students aged 7 to 12 years, of whom 37% (N=34) were primary education subject teachers and 63% (N=58) were teachers-specialists (2 primary education teachers-speech therapists, 19 primary education subject teachers as well as non-formal education specialists, 37 teachers-tutors). There were 38 (N=38) teachers educating students aged 13 to 17 years, of whom 66% (N=25) were basic education subject teachers and 34% (N=13) were basic education subject teachers-specialists (4 teachers-special educators, 9 teachers who also worked as non-formal education specialists). The research sample was formed by applying purposeful sampling according to the following criteria: 1) research participants have contact hours with students who have special educational needs; 2) the participants of the research are teachers of formal education subjects; and 3) they participate in the study voluntarily. The research sample was oriented to teachers and teachers-specialists, as they spend the most contact time with students who have special educational needs; besides, their activities during lessons can be richer and more diverse due to the possibilities to differentiate the curriculum and include targeted activities developing emotional intelligence.

To conduct the research, verbal consents of the heads of institutions and research participants were obtained. The ethics of research was ensured following several principles: 1) the names of the institutions that participated in the research are not mentioned either in the results or in other texts of this article; 2) the personal data of the research participants or the encryptions of those data are not provided in the texts of the study; 3) the research results are presented only as general statistical indicators, without revealing the indicators of different institutions or their differences; and 4) the results of the study are published only in scientific articles and presented at scientific conferences.

Research results

First, the parts of the structure of emotional intelligence, which are characteristic of students of both age groups are analysed. All the results are analysed according to individual

parts of the model rather than based on the general construct of emotional intelligence. The research participants assessed six parts characteristic of the structure of emotional intelligence of students in both age groups. All parts are related to the above-mentioned educational activities. The frequency of the research participants' approval revealed how often the manifestation of structural parts of emotional intelligence is assessed; then, how often they are developed through targeted activities; how often, through non-targeted activities; and, finally, how often students who have special educational needs are encouraged to understand the importance of the respective part. It is important to emphasize that these peculiarities of emotional intelligence development were identified for students who had special educational needs and learned in inclusive schools.

The results of the study related to the activities of assessing manifestation of parts of the structure of emotional intelligence with regard to teachers are presented in Table 1. It is emphasized that assessment in this study is understood as a subjective and informal phenomenon and it is presented as the first activity of emotional intelligence development, because such an assessment may determine other perspectives of developing the part of the structure.

Table 1. Evaluation of manifestation of parts of the structure of emotional intelligence

| Part of the structure of emotional intelligence | Number of answers by the age of educated students | | | | p* |
| | Students aged 7-12 years (N=92) | | Students aged 13-17 years (N=38) | | |
	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	
Adaptation	71.10	6541,00	51.95	1974,00	0.004
Expression of emotions	55.20	6117,00	63.11	2097,50	0.620
Perception of emotions	66.49	6236,50	59.96	2398,00	0.247
Regulation of emotions	67.79	6270,00	59.08	2278,50	0.179
Self-esteem	68.89	6048,00	64.92	2177,00	0.898
Self-motivation	64.00	5888,00	69.13	2467,00	0.432

(p < 0,05 – Sig. (2–tailed) – statistical significance)

Analysing the results of the study in terms of assessment, it was noted that teachers assessed 4 out of 6 parts with higher scores for students aged 7-12 years. The statistically significant difference between these parts in the adaptation part was recorded as well. Teachers who took part in the study indicated that greater expression of emotions and self-motivation was assessed among older students (13-17 years old). This means that older students are potentially more emotional and more able to motivate themselves for a respective activity. The smallest difference between the parts of emotional intelligence in the aspect of teachers' assessment was found in the parts of self-esteem (3.97) and self-motivation (5.13); the largest, in the parts of adaptation (11.15) and regulation of emotions (8.89). According to the teachers, students of different ages are similar in their self-esteem and the ability to motivate themselves and most different in their abilities to adapt and regulate emotions. According to the results of the research, it can be stated that the majority of structural parts of emotional intelligence in the aspect of teachers' assessment manifest themselves more among students aged 7 to 12 years.

After identifying how the research participants assess manifestation of parts of the structure of emotional intelligence, the analysis was undertaken to find out how targeted

activities for the development of the said parts were organized. These research results are also compared in the aspect of students of different ages (see Table 2). It is accentuated that in this study, targeted education is defined as organization or performance of certain targeted activities intended for the development of emotional intelligence.

Table 2. Development of parts of the structure of emotional intelligence by applying targeted activities

| Structural part of emotional intelligence | Number of answers by educated students' age | | | | p* |
| | 7-12 years (N=92) | | 13-17 years (N=38) | | |
	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	
Adaptation	68,87	6336,00	57,34	2179,00	0.092
Expression of emotions	67,96	6252,00	59,55	2263,00	0.198
Perception of emotions	66,73	6139,50	62,51	2375,50	0.532
Regulation of emotions	69,11	6358,00	56,76	2157,00	0.065
Self-esteem	61,52	5660,00	75,13	2855,00	0.041
Self-motivation	65,26	6004,00	66,08	2511,00	0.900

($p < 0,05$ – Sig. (2-tailed) – statistical significance)

The analysis of the research results revealed a similar analogy with the peculiarities of teachers' assessment in the previous analysis of results. It was found that the major part of the structure of emotional intelligence through targeted activities is developed for younger students (7-12 years old). Self-esteem and self-motivation by applying targeted activities are more developed in older students. This means that self-motivation is possibly one of the priority abilities in inclusive schools for 12-17 year olds. A statistically significant difference of data was recorded only in the part of self-esteem. Analysing the results of the study, it was observed that the smallest difference with regard to targeted education was found between perception of emotions (4.22) and self-motivation (0.82). The largest difference was identified between self-esteem (13.61) and regulation of emotions (12.35). Based on the results of the study, it can be stated that the targeted development of the parts of emotional intelligence in students of different ages is most similar in the parts of perception of emotions and self-motivation; and least similar, in the parts of self-esteem and regulation of emotions. This means that older students are given more attention in developing their self-confidence; while younger students, in developing regulation of their emotions. It can be stated that emotional intelligence in inclusive schools is more often purposefully developed in younger (7-12 years old) students.

The third part of the questionnaire was oriented to the development of parts of emotional intelligence through non-targeted activities. This means that the essence of the third part of the questionnaire is to find out how the research participants develop emotional intelligence through usual educational (lesson) activities (see Table 3).

Table 3. Development of parts of the structure of emotional intelligence by applying non-targeted activities

| Structural part of emotional intelligence | Number of answers by educated students' age | | | | p* |
| | 7-12 years (N=92) | | 13-17 years (N=38) | | |
	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	
Adaptation	68,96	6344,50	57,12	2170,50	0.089
Expression of emotions	69,76	6418,00	55,18	2097,00	0.033
Perception of emotions	70,49	6485,00	53,42	2030,00	0.012
Regulation of emotions	66,90	6155,00	62,11	2360,00	0.490
Self-esteem	67,27	6189,00	61,21	2326,00	0.372
Self-motivation	68,15	6269,50	59,09	2245,50	0.174

(p < 0,05 – Sig. (2-tailed) – statistical significance)

Analysing the results of the study, it was noticed that in this part of the study, two statistically significant differences of data were identified. Such differences are recorded in the parts of expression of emotions and perception of emotions. The results of the research reveal that parts of the structure of emotional intelligence in the aspect of non-targeted education are more often developed in younger students (7-12 years old). Based on the results of the study, it was found that the smallest difference in the aspect of non-targeted development of emotional intelligence is between self-esteem (6.00) and regulation of emotions (4.79). The largest difference was identified between the perception of emotions (17.07) and expression of emotions (14.58). This means that parts of the structure of emotional intelligence of students of different ages in terms of non-targeted education are most similar by the parts of self-esteem and regulation of emotions; and least similar, by the parts of perception of emotions and expression of emotions. This may mean that in the lower grades, more creative educational activities are carried out, allowing younger age students to self-develop their perception and expression of emotions. Based on the results of the study, it can be stated that the teachers who participated in the study more often organize non-targeted activities that possibly develop younger age students' emotional intelligence.

In the fourth part of the analysis of results, it was identified how often the research participants encouraged students to perceive what personal benefit was obtained from different structural parts of emotional intelligence as individual constructs and why it was important to strengthen these parts (see Table 4). It is highlighted that promotion of perception of importance is described as teachers' targeted actions increasing students' needs and willingness to develop their emotional intelligence.

Table 4. Promoting perception of the importance of parts of the structure of emotional intelligence

Structural part of emotional intelligence	Number of answers by educated students' age				p*
	7–12 years (N=92)		13–17 years (N=38)		
	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	
Adaptation	68,95	6343,00	57,16	2172,00	0.058
Expression of emotions	68,76	6326,00	57,61	2189,00	0.089
Perception of emotions	67,97	6253,50	59,51	2261,50	0.211
Regulation of emotions	68,94	6342,50	57,17	2172,50	0.078
Self-esteem	65,60	6035,00	65,26	2480,00	0.956
Self-motivation	68,40	6292,50	58,49	2222,50	0.134

($p < 0,05$ – Sig. (2-tailed) – statistical significance)

The analysis of the results of the study revealed indicators that are almost analogous to the ones in the previous analysis. This means that the perception of the importance of the parts of the structure of emotional intelligence is more often promoted in younger age students (7-12 years old). It was observed that statistically significant data were recorded only in the adaptation part. Analysing the results of the study, the smallest statistical difference was found in the parts of self-esteem (0.34) and perception of emotions (8.46). The largest statistical difference was identified in the parts of regulation of emotions (11.77) and adaptation (11.15). This means that the frequency of promoting the importance of parts of the structure of emotional intelligence in students of different ages is most similar in the aspect of self-esteem and perception of emotions; the most different, with regard to regulation of emotions and adaptation.

In the fifth part of the analysis of the research results, the research results by rank are presented. This means that after evaluating every part of the structure of emotional intelligence according to the sums of scores of selected variants, their total number is obtained. A higher number determines a higher position in the ranking (higher number means that education is applied most). Such ranking reveals the most frequently and the most rarely developed parts of the structure of emotional intelligence (see Table 5). The results are presented according to the rank of the number of scores in the descending order, having identified which parts of the structure of emotional intelligence are most often assessed, purposefully and non-purposefully developed, and the perception of the importance of which parts is promoted most often. The parts with the highest frequency of peculiarity of education are marked by a lower number; with the lowest frequency, by a higher number.

Table 5. Distribution of parts of the structure of emotional intelligence by rank in the aspect of both age groups of students

No. of ranking	Parts of the structure of emotional intelligence
1	Self-motivation
2	Self-esteem
3	Perception of emotions
4	Regulation of emotions
5	Adaptation
6	Expression of emotions

Analysing the results of the study, a distinct distribution of parts of the structure of emotional intelligence in all age groups is observed. Based on the results of the research, the following ranking of parts of the structure was determined: 1) self-motivation; 2) self-esteem; 3) perception of emotions; 4) regulation of emotions; 5) adaptation; 6) expression of emotions. Such a ranking reveals that students who have special educational needs and learn in inclusive schools are most educated in the aspect of emotional intelligence towards internal self-encouragement and self-suggestion to perform certain activities.

Based on the results of the study, the most frequently developed parts of the structure of emotional intelligence of younger students are ranked in the following sequence: 1) adaptation; 2) relationships with peers; 3) regulation of emotions; 4) low impulsivity; 5) perception of emotions; 6) self-motivation; 7) self-esteem; 8) affect management; 9) expression of emotions. The distribution of peculiarities of education is also presented: 1) non-targeted development of emotional intelligence; 2) promoting awareness of the importance of parts of its structure; 3) targeted development of emotional intelligence 4) subjective assessment of parts of its structure. Analysing the results of the study, the same aspects were revealed with regard to older students. The most developed parts of trait emotional intelligence are ranked as follows: 1) self-esteem; 2) impulsivity control; 3) social awareness; 4) self-motivation; 5) management of other persons' emotions; 6) optimism; 7) assurance; 8) stress management; 9) expression of emotions; 10) perception of emotions; 11) regulation of emotions; 12) adaptation; 13) interpersonal relationships; 14) empathy; 15) happiness. The revealed distribution of peculiarities of education for older students is ranked in the following order: 1) organization of targeted activities developing emotional intelligence; 2) non-targeted development of emotional intelligence; 3) promoting awareness of the importance of parts of the structure of emotional intelligence; 4) subjective assessment of parts of the structure of emotional intelligence.

The analysis of the research results has revealed that the most frequently used activities developing emotional intelligence in inclusive schools are related to targeted and non-targeted development of its structural parts. It can be assumed that for these reasons, the development of emotional intelligence in inclusive schools takes place through all activities and that the development of emotional intelligence in pupils who have special educational needs in inclusive schools possibly takes place independently of its assessment or activities promoting the perception of its importance.

Discussion

The analysis of the research results has revealed that the teachers who participated in the study more often develop emotional intelligence in younger age students. It is emphasized that such education is also applied to older students, but the comparison in the age aspect shows that such education for older students takes place less often and not so holistically. This can be determined by several factors. First, along with the increasing age of students, the need for higher academic performance is also increasing. Therefore, educating older age students, more attention is paid not to the development of emotional intelligence but to academic performance and traditional subjects. Such educational activities are targeted, oriented to the academic performance, and are more homogeneous, contrary to the educational processes of younger age students, where highly creative and manifold education is applied. Another reason is that emotional intelligence is most favourably developed at a younger age (Uzsalyné & Pécsi, 2016). It is especially important to create a safe environment for students, in which they could

freely express their emotions, talk about them not only with each other but also with older persons, adults (Firestone, 2016). It can be assumed that the results of this study correlate/ relate to the data provided by Uzsalyné and Pécsi (2016): more frequent development of emotional intelligence was found in lower, primary education classes. Based on the results of frequency of the research participants' approval, it can be stated that their activities are a favourable condition for developing emotional intelligence of students who have special educational needs and of younger students' emotional intelligence. As stated by Firestone (2016), such conditions can be individual and group work, learning through play, a wide range of non-traditional lessons, and the like.

The results of the survey of upper-year students have revealed that the main focus is on those parts of the structure of emotional intelligence that are more oriented to interpersonal relationships and socialization: social awareness, empathy. Similar results were reported by Mavroveli, Petrides, Rieffe, & Bakker (2007). Researchers have revealed that at this age, students have highly expressed competences and parts of the structure of emotional intelligence related to cooperation and relationships with peers. It has also been found that considerable attention is paid to stress management. Basically, such perspectives are a positive aspect for several reasons. First, based on Smetana, Robinson, & Rote (2015), socialization in the second decade of life is a very important part of human life because namely during this period people are exposed to a large number of various conditions determining further and multifaceted development. Students of this age experience constant and diverse changes: both physiological and mental as well as changes in communication and relationship with the environment. Students' abilities to adapt to on-going change can also be revealed through socialization, constant communication with peers and older people, learning to accept that change (Grusec & Hastings, 2015). This means that the development of the parts of the emotional intelligence structure, which are associable with socialization processes, is very important for students of this age. The factor of developing stress management abilities also has a substantial impact on adolescents. According to the data of the World Health Organization (2019), during adolescence, various factors causing stress are encountered, which include a greater need for autonomy and recognition among peers, perception of gender, and easier access to various kinds of information and technologies. This means that stress coping abilities that are developed in inclusive schools are of particular importance. The results of the study revealed that mostly developed parts of the structure of emotional intelligence among older students encompassed some of the most important aspects of lives of people of this age.

Several difficulties were encountered during the study. One of them was the researcher's involvement in the data collection process. Due to the sample of the study and the participants' busyness factor, it was not possible to participate in the surveys directly and clearly answer the research participants' questions. Another difficulty was formulating the suitable research sample. Not all inclusive school teachers educate students who have special educational needs, and not all schools that have such students benevolently give permission to conduct the research. A large share of the research sample work not only as teachers but also hold other positions in the same institution (for example, work as form tutors, social pedagogues, and the like). It is important to emphasize that research participants were selected according to respective selection criteria. A share of the research sample was subject to the administration of the educational institution after obtaining the consents of prospective research participants.

The conducted study has certain weaknesses. First, the research instrument is not a validated questionnaire, although it is designed according to the structure of trait emotional

intelligence for different age groups. There appears a possibility that not all teachers who took part in the research understood questionnaire concepts or given examples properly. This could have affected the results. Another weakness is that the research sample consisted only of teachers or teachers-specialists directly contacting with students who have special educational needs. The decision to include only teachers and to exclude other specialists who did not have lessons was mainly determined by the orientation of the research – the activities organized during the lessons. However, there remains a possibility that other professionals would provide different data that are little related to lesson activities.

Preparing similar studies in the future, it is recommended to use more diverse data collection and analysis methods, to select additional research instruments (e.g., structured interview, content analysis, and the like) that are related to the chosen emotional intelligence theory for even greater data saturation. It is also advised to ensure a more active participation of the researcher in the data collection process, because investigating emotional intelligence not as an integral phenomenon but studying its separate structural parts, it is very important to clearly perceive and distinguish between their differences in order to give clear answers to the questions arising to the research participants, this way ensuring the informativeness of the research data. The study sample should also include child support professionals and other school staff who may have useful data for the study. Finally, it is recommended that similar studies should be conducted in other cities, towns, and the like, this way revealing general similarities and differences with regard to results. It is advised that educational institutions interested in the development of students' emotional intelligence should clearly and purposefully name the theory and the model of emotional intelligence according to which education will be carried out. Different models of emotional intelligence have different structures and research instruments, and in the long run, these are very important factors.

References

Alegre, A., Pérez-Escoda, N., & López-Cassá, E. (2019). The Relationship Between Trait Emotional Intelligence and Personality. Is Trait EI Really Anchored Within the Big Five, Big Two and Big One Frameworks? *Frontiers in psychology*, *10*, 866. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00866.

Bar-On, R. (1997). *BarOn emotional quotient inventory*. Toronto: Multi–health systems.

Bhootrani, M. L. & Junejo J. (2016). Emotional Intelligence is a Key to Success. *J Liaquat Uni Med Health Sci. 15*(03), 108–9.

Biswal, M. (2015). Inclusive Education and EQ. *Scholarly Research Journal For Interdisciplinary studies 3*(19), 499–507.

Carissoli, C. & Villani, D. (2019). Can Videogames Be Used to Promote Emotional Intelligence in Teenagers? Results from EmotivaMente, a School Program. *Games for Health Journal*, *8*(6), 407–413.

Dehghanan, H., Abdollahi, H., & Rezaei, M. (2014). A study on effect of big five personality traits on emotional intelligence. *Management Science Letters, 4*(6), 1279–1284.

Dhani, P. & Sharma, T. (2016). Emotional Intelligence: History, Models and Measures. *International Journal of Science Technology and Management, 5*(7), 189–201.

Firestone L. (2016). Why We Need to Teach Kids Emotional Intelligence. *Psychology Today* Retrieved from: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/compassion–matters/201603/why–we–need–teach–kids–emotional–intelligence;

Grams, S. & Jurowetzki, R. (2015). Emotions in the Classroom: The Powerful Role of Classroom Relationships. In B. Lund & T. Chemi (Eds.), *Dealing with Emotions: A Pedagogical Challenge to Innovative Learning* (pp. 81-98). Brill | Sense. Creative Education Bookseries. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6300-064-2_5

Gershon, P. & Pellitteri, J. (2018). Promoting Emotional Intelligence in Preschool Education: A Review of Programs. *International Journal of Emotional Education*, *10*(2), 26–41.

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence.* New York: Bantam Books.

Grusec, J. E. & Hastings, P. D. (Eds.). (2014). *Handbook of socialization: Theory and research*. New York: Guilford Publications.

Indradevi, R. (2015). A relationship between emotional intelligence and Myer Briggs Big Five personality model. *International Journal of Economic Policy in Emerging Economies*, *8*(4), 361–374.

Kumar, L. (2013). Disability and Inclusive Education. *People's Dialogue on Education*, *5*(1), 1–10;

Locke, E. A. (2005). Why emotional intelligence is an invalid concept. *Journal of organizational Behavior*, *26*(4), 425–431.

Mainhard, T., Oudman, S., Hornstra, L., Bosker, R. J., & Goetz, T. (2018). Student emotions in class: The relative importance of teachers and their interpersonal relations with students. *Learning and Instruction*, *53*, 109–119.

Mavroveli, S., Petrides, K. V., Rieffe, C., & Bakker, F. (2007). Trait emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and peer-rated social competence in adolescence. *British journal of developmental psychology, 25*(2), 263–275.

Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2014). Mayer–Salovey–Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test: Youth Research Version.

Mayer, J. D., Caruso, D. R., & Salovey, P. (2016). The ability model of emotional intelligence: Principles and updates. *Emotion review*, *8*(4), 290–300.

Özer, E., Hamarta, E., & Deniz, M. E. (2016). Emotional intelligence, core–self-evaluation, and life satisfaction. *Psychology*, *7*(2), 145–153.

Pécsi, U. (2016). *Educational service of life 3 (Trust, Discipline, Authority).* Key to Music Publish;

Petrides, K. V. (2011). *Ability and trait emotional intelligence.* In T. Chamorro-Premuzic, S. von Stumm, & A. Furnham (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell handbooks of personality and individual differences. The Wiley-Blackwell handbook of individual differences* (pp. 656–678).

Petrides, K. V. & Furnham, A. (2001). Trait emotional intelligence: Psychometric investigation with reference to established trait taxonomies. *European journal of personality*, *15*(6), 425–448.

Petrides, K. V. & Mavroveli, S. (2018). Theory and applications of trait emotional intelligence. *Psychology*, *23*(1), 24–36.

Pettinelli, M. (2012). *The psychology of emotions, feelings and thoughts*. Fresno: Lightning Source.

PSO. (2019). Adolescent mental health. *World Health Organization.* Retrieved from: https://www.who.int/news–room/fact–sheets/detail/adolescent–mental–health;

Rodrigues, A. L. & Machado, C. (2019). Emotional Intelligence: Telling the history and discovering the models. In *Emotional Intelligence and Neuro–Linguistic Programming* (pp. 33–52). CRC Press.

Salovey, P. & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, cognition and personality*, *9*(3), 185–211.

Siegling, A. B., Saklofske, D. H., & Petrides, K. V. (2015). Measures of ability and trait emotional intelligence. In *Measures of personality and social psychological constructs*. 381–414. Massachusetts: Academic Press.

Smetana, J. G., Robinson, J., & Rote, W. M. (2015). Socialization in adolescence. *Handbook of socialization: Theory and research*, 60–84.

Taylor, R. D., Oberle, E., Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2017). Promoting positive youth development through school-based social and emotional learning interventions: A meta-analysis of follow-up effects. *Child Development, 88*(4), 1156–1171.

DEVELOPMENT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Summary

Simas Garbenis, Renata Geležinienė, Šiauliai University, Lithuania
Greta Šiaučiulytė, Šiauliai Region Association of Social Pedagogues, Lithuania

Emotions are becoming an increasingly relevant construct for professionals, academicians and researchers in various fields. It is namely emotions that are the determining factor initiating change in people's behaviour, the effectiveness and direction of decision-making, the formation of relationships, and other aspects of daily life (Siegling, Saklofske, & Petrides, 2015; Salovey, Mayer, & Caruso, 2016). In other words, emotions are an inevitable reflection of the person's state. Realizing the importance of emotions and emotional powers to people's quality of life, recent decades witnessed a very strong focus on emotional intelligence as a separate construct (Dhani & Sharma, 2016).

Although the functions and basic ideas of emotional intelligence principally do not differ, there are several basic theories and models with different structures (Petrides & Furnham, 2001; Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1995; Salovey et al., 1990): 1) Goleman's theory; 2) Salovey-Mayer-Caruso (Ability) theory; 3) Bar-On (mixed) theory; and 4) Petrides (trait) theory. The scientific literature reveals that the biggest difference between these emotional intelligence theories lies not in their structure but in research instruments (Petrides, 2011; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016). The essential theory of the article, which served as a basis for conducting the research participants' survey, was the selected theory of trait emotional intelligence. It was chosen for several different criteria: 1) parts of the structure of this theory model correlate with the basic personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism), making up the *Big Five* personality structure; 2) in contrast to other emotional intelligence models, the model of trait emotional intelligence reveals that structure of emotional intelligence which manifests itself in normal everyday conditions rather than in situations where emotional powers are used to the maximum; 3) the research instruments of this model measure not only the total emotional intelligence quotient (EQ) but also various aspects related to success in life.

These days, emotional intelligence is often treated as a more important aspect determining success in life than general intelligence. Based on scientific research data, it can be stated that people with high emotional intelligence are more successful in various aspects of life (Bhootrani & Junejo, 2016; Ozer, Hamarta, & Deniz, 2016). Manifestation of emotional intelligence in everyday life and its application in various fields (clinical, educational, organizational, etc.) are perceived as everyday phenomena (Petrides & Mavroveli, 2018).

It can be stated that the development of emotional intelligence is particularly important for students who have special educational needs. Such students face emotional problems when learning in inclusive settings as well: they often compare themselves with other students and assess themselves negatively, have difficulty collecting their thoughts, are unable to express feelings, emotions, and calm themselves (Kumar, 2013). However, such conditions are favourable for the development of emotional intelligence due to on-going social interactions, different activities and challenges. Students who have special educational needs and high emotional intelligence distinguish themselves by better academic performance and learning motivation, better planning and problem-solving abilities, strong perception of friendship, appropriate behaviour, and a positive attitude towards school and learning (Kumar, 2013; Biswal, 2015).

Based on these statements, the main aim of the research was set – to analyse teachers' opinion about the development of emotional intelligence of students who have special educational needs in inclusive schools.

After conducting the research, it was found that the development of emotional intelligence was carried out differently depending on students' age. Differences were recorded both between the developed parts of the structure of emotional intelligence and between the applied educational activities. Both statistically significant and insignificant research data were obtained and it was identified that the development of emotional intelligence for younger students was more oriented to their inner self-knowledge; while for older students, to the aspects of socialization. In inclusive schools, the main activities of emotional intelligence development are carried out through its targeted and non-targeted development.

Corresponding Author's E-mail: s007-s285_simas_garbenis@stud.su.lt