

The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Predicting Peer Relationships in Adolescents

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Abstract

The aim of the research is to determine how much peer relationships are explained by emotional intelligence in adolescents. For this purpose, 539 (283 female+256 male) adolescent individuals participated in the study. “Personal Information Form”, “Trait Emotional Intelligence—Adolescent Questionnaire Short Form (TEIQue-ASF)” and “Friendship Qualities Scale” were used as data collection tools in the research. The data collected online were coded and transferred to the SPSS program, and descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and Regression techniques were used in statistical analysis. In the study, the level of significance was taken as $p < .001$. According to the results of the analysis, it was determined that there was a positive, significant and low-level correlation between emotional intelligence and peer relationships ($r = .283$, $p = .000$). As a result of the regression analysis, in Model 1, TEIQue-ASF explained 7.8% of the total variance of Friendship Qualities; In Model 2, on the other hand, TEIQue-ASF explained 12.7% of the total variance regarding Friendship Qualities, the variables of gender and playing in the school team. As a result, it can be said that emotional intelligence is an important factor for peer relationships in adolescents.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Peer relations, Puberty, Sports

1. Introduction

The concept of intelligence refers to mental learning ability (Atıç, 2021). Emotion, on the

other hand, is the feeling that a person has and it shows the psychological and biological conditions specific to it (Aysel, 2006), and also it is known as mental state (Safarli, 2020). Emotional intelligence consists of the combination of the concepts of emotion and intelligence (Tetik & Açıkgöz, 2013). Emotions are very important in the relationship of people with their environment in life. Being aware of one's own emotions and being able to recognize the emotions of others and manage their behavior in that direction affects the success of the social environment. In order for all of these to happen, a person must be able to recognize himself as a priority. This brings us to the concept of emotional intelligence, on which researches are intensified day by day (Şen & Özbey, 2017). Emotional intelligence, a concept that was created by Peter Salovey and John Mayer in 1990 and developed with Daniel Goleman, has gained value day by day (Gül & Güney, 2019). Primarily, it is a concept that includes the ability to recognize and understand one's self, as well as the ability to recognize and understand the feelings of others, and the ability to empathize. Emotional intelligence is based on "self-knowledge (self-awareness)". It includes the recognition of an individual's emotions, strengths and weaknesses, needs and impulses. While Goleman defines emotional intelligence as "the basic life skill that includes determination, perseverance, being able to act on oneself, understanding what others feel and being able to control impulses" (Tetik & Açıkgöz, 2013), a person's healthy communication means one's ability to adapt in the face of an unexpected event, and is the ability to cope with problems and to thrive in the face of environmental demands. If a person knows himself in every way, he can control his emotions and have healthy relations with others (Şen & Özbey, 2017). In addition, emotional intelligence is the dimension of intelligence that supports the formation of a person's vision, in reaching his goal, in life satisfaction, in the management of his relationships, in his ability to solve problems when faced, in turning to the healthy one among the options (Erdoğan, 2008). Emotional intelligence can be developed over time, and the development of emotional intelligence contributes to the development of interpersonal relationships (Safarli, 2020).

The relationship factor also has a very important place in a person's life. The means by which the relationship takes place is communication. While relationships create the texture of life, the factor that gives life to relationships is communication. In relationships between people, communication is the most basic element in interaction. Communication skills play an important role in maintaining trust-based and satisfying relationships (Boz et al., 2021). Emotion management is important in ensuring effective communication. With the control and management of emotion, success is achieved in communication in relationships (Gül & Güney, 2019). The individual's self-knowledge, awareness of his own emotions and being aware of the emotions of others support his success in peer relations (Şen & Özbey, 2017).

Emotional intelligence is associated with higher levels of psychosocial adjustment, which are interpreted in many different ways (such as general adjustment levels, psychological well-being, mental and physical health, emotional adjustment, and life satisfaction) (Petrides et al., 2017; Resurreccion et al., 2014; Lea et al., 2018). When the literature is examined, emotional intelligence is examined by peer relations (Şen & Özbey, 2017), while there are different studies on emotional intelligence and peer bullying in the related literature (Balak,

2017; Önder & Yıldırım, 2017; Sezen & Murat, 2018; Semiz, 2018; Pektane Gülmez et al., 2019). In this direction, the aim of the study is to investigate the effect of emotional intelligence on peer relations.

2. Method

2.1 Research Model

The research was designed with the “*correlational survey model*”, which is one of the quantitative approaches. The correlational survey model is expressed as studies in which “*the relationship between two or more variables is examined without intervening in any way*” (Büyüköztürk et al., 2013).

2.2 Research Group

The research group consists of 539 (283 female + 256 male) adolescents determined by convenience sampling method. Information about the students is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information

Variables	Subgroups	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	256	47.5
	Female	283	52.5
Age	11	70	13
	12	127	23.6
	13	175	32.4
	14	167	31
Do You Play on the School Team?	Yes	294	54.5
	No	245	45.5
Total		539	100

When the demographic information of the participants whose percentage values were higher than the other groups were analyzed, it was determined that 52.5% were male, 32.4% were 13 years old, and 54.5% were in school teams.

2.3 Data Collection Tools

“Personal Information Form”, “Trait Emotional Intelligence—Adolescent Questionnaire Short Form (TEIQue-ASF)” and “Friendship Qualities Scale” were used as data collection tools. Detailed information about data collection tools is given below.

2.3.1 Personal Information Form

In order to determine some demographic information of the students, the “Personal Information Form” created by the researchers was used. In this form, it is aimed to reach information such as gender, age and digital game playing time of students.

2.3.2 Trait Emotional Intelligence—Adolescent Questionnaire Short Form (TEIQue-ASF)

Trait Emotional Intelligence—Adolescent Questionnaire Short Form was developed by Petrides and Furnham in 2006 and adapted into Turkish by Ergin (2017). EIQue-ASF is a 7-point Likert-type measurement tool designed to measure total emotional intelligence (from 1: strongly disagree to 7: strongly agree). The Trait Emotional Intelligence—Adolescent Questionnaire Short Form (TEIQue-ASF) has a 4-factor structure consisting of 15 items. These are subjective well-being (items 20, 24, 27, 5, 12, 9), self-control (items 19, 30, 15), sociability (items 16, 10, 14), emotionality (items 29, 1, 11). Items 2, 4, 6, 7, 9 on the scale are reverse items. The scale should be evaluated over the total score, and the highest possible score is 105 and the lowest score is 15. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was found to be .78.

In the analysis made within the scope of this research, information about the scale is given in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of TEIQue-ASF scale scores

Dependent Variable	Item Number	Average	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach Alpha
TEIQue-ASF	15	5.01	.04	-.285	.037	.70

It is seen that the total average score of the participants from the TEIQue-ASF scale is 5.01. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scales was calculated as .70. The fact that the skewness and kurtosis values are in the range of ± 1 provides the necessary prerequisite for the normal distribution.

2.3.3 Friendship Qualities Scale

Developed by Bukowski, Hoza, and Boivin (1994) and adapted into Turkish by Atik, Çoban, Çok, Doğam, and Karaman (2014), the Friendship Qualities Scale (FQS) consists of 22 items and five sub-dimensions (together, conflict, help, protection, closeness). The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found to be .85. The conflict sub-dimension is scored in reverse in the scale. It is highly scored. In the analysis made within the scope of this research, information about the scale is given in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of FQS scale scores

Dependent Variable	Item Number	Average	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach Alpha
FQS	22	3.60	.03	-.444	-.360	0.84

It is seen that the total average score of the participants from the Friendship Qualities Scale (FQS) is 3.60. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated as .84. The fact that the skewness and kurtosis values are in the range of ± 1 provides the necessary prerequisite for the normal distribution.

2.4 Data Collection

The questions in the research were made ready by transferring them to the online environment via Google forms. At the beginning of the form, detailed explanations about the purpose and importance of the research were given, and a voluntary participation consent button was added. Data were collected from students who read the information given and voluntarily agreed to participate in the research. In order to collect the data, necessary permissions were obtained from the authorities and the parent consent form was filled.

2.5 Data Analysis

The data collected in the online environment were coded and transferred to the SPSS program and the normality distribution was examined. In the analyzes made, the skewness and kurtosis values of the data were taken into account and it was determined that the values obtained were in the range of -1, ... +1. These values were accepted as suitable for normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and Regression technique were used in statistical analysis. In the study, the level of significance was taken as $p < .001$.

3. Results

In this part of the study, the relations between the variables were tested and the effects of the variables of emotional intelligence, gender and participation in sports in the school team on peer relations were examined.

The results of the correlation analysis performed to determine the relationships between the variables are given in the table below.

Table 4. Correlation analysis results

	TEIQue-ASF
FQS	.283*

Note. * $p < .001$.

According to the results in Table 5, it was determined that there was a positive, significant and low-level relationship between FQS and TEIQue-ASF ($r = .283$, $p = .000$).

A multiple regression analysis was conducted on how much the variables of TEIQue-ASF and playing in the school team explained FQS, and the results are given below.

Table 5. Multiple regression analysis results

	Variable	R	R ² _{adj}	F	B	Std. Error	β	t	p
1					2.652	.141	-	18.766	.000
	TEIQue-ASF	.080	.078	46.800	.190	.028	.283	6.841	.000*
2	Stable				2.586	.028		15.334	.000
	TEIQue-ASF				.184	.027	.273	6.772	.000*
	Gender	.132	.127	27.115	.251	.052	.197	4.813	.000*
	Playing in the School Team				-.194	.052	-.152	-3.725	.000*

Note. * $p < .001$; Method: Stepwise.

As a result of the regression analysis, it was seen that TEIQue-ASF significantly predicted Friendship Qualities in Model 1 ($F_{(1,537)} = 46,800$, $p < .001$). When the values are examined, TEIQue-ASF explains 7.8% of the total variance regarding Friendship Qualities. In Model 2, on the other hand, it is seen that the variables of TEIQue-ASF, gender and playing in the school team significantly predict the Friendship Qualities. When the values are examined, TEIQue-ASF explains 12.7% of the total variance regarding Friendship Qualities, the variables of gender and playing in the school team.

4. Discussion

Considering the important role that peer relationships play in social and emotional development, emotional intelligence is thought to be important. The following results were obtained in the study examining the effect of emotional intelligence on peer relations.

It has been determined that there is a positive, significant and low level relationship between emotional intelligence and peer relations. When similar studies with our sample group were examined, a positive relationship was found between emotional intelligence and positive social qualities such as higher academic achievement, better peer relations, and leadership (Agnoli et al., 2012; Andrei et al., 2015; Banjac et al., 2016). It supported the utility of emotional intelligence in predicting criteria related to health and socio-emotional well-being in child, adolescent and adult samples (Andrei et al., 2014). Adolescents with low emotional intelligence show that they are more likely to be exposed to peer bullying (Baroncelli & Ciucci, 2014; Lamos et al., 2012). There are studies showing that emotional intelligence acts

as a buffer against individuals who are exposed to peer bullying (Davis & Humphrey, 2012; Extremera et al., 2018). It has been determined that emotional intelligence can be a promising area for children's emotional problems and their relationships with their peers (Mateu-Martinez, 2017). A defining aspect of psychosocial adjustment in present and future life includes peer relationships (Domitrovich et al., 2017). Social acceptance and harmony among friends are associated with well-being, increased school performance, and high self-esteem (Wentzel et al., 2003). Yurdakavuştu (2012) found a significant difference in emotional intelligence levels according to the gender of the students, whether they participate in activities or not, and their socioeconomic status. A moderate, positive and significant relationship was found between emotional intelligence and social skills.

Sports experiences are emotional in nature. Winning and losing, surpassing yourself through performance, or recovering from an injury can all lead to different emotions. Emotions are inherent in competition and significantly affect performance (Arribas-Galarraga et al., 2017; Magrum et al., 2019). Sports experience activates emotions and considering that individuals react differently to these experiences, it may be a possible mechanism for the development of emotional intelligence (Campo et al., 2016). Berry (2013), in his thesis study, which examined the four branches of the ability model of emotional intelligence (perceiving emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions and managing emotions), team commitment (task, social and general), and team performance disaggregated by gender, emotional intelligence was only classified according to gender. It has been determined that when arranged according to gender, it has a significant effect on social team commitment, other relationships are not statistically significant when arranged according to gender, and there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence, team commitment and team performance.

5. Conclusion

As a result, it is thought that being on the school team has a predictive power on school adjustment and social acceptance, as well as on peer relations. The current study is thought to be important for the development of emotional intelligence, participation in the school team, gaining a sense of belonging and supporting peer relations. Emotional intelligence programs can encourage the development of one's own emotional understanding and peer relationships. More work could be done to more deeply understand the relationships between school team experience and emotional intelligence.

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