

EMOTIONAL MATURITY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH ANXIETY AND OPTIMISM IN ADOLESCENCE

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Abstract: The emotional maturity is one of the psychological aspects which influence the relationship of the person and its performance in any field. Some psychologists relate this with the emotional intelligence and the capacity of knowing and understand his own emotions and those of the other. The author presents a study which was conducted on a number of 65 subjects from which 36 non-institutionalized and 29 of in institutions, aged between 17 and 19 years old. The aim of the research was to underline the relation between emotional maturity and the anxiety as trait and the optimism.

Key words: emotional maturity, anxiety as trait, optimism, adolescents

Theoretic framework

The concept of emotional "mature" behavior is reflected in what we call a normal emotional development. Like other concepts related to maladjustment and mental health, emotional maturity concept also happens to be a by-product (an unexpected and side benefit) of therapeutic interventions in the psychiatric environment. Emotional maturity is always relative, develops throughout life and is the mature form from which the person can reversed.

"The mental available resources are used to implement a motivated mental state. If we are over-motivated our resources are quickly diminished and reach an opposite state (we are tense, distracted than before); excessive motivation has against intentional effect because it consumes too much neurocognitive resources in a short time." (Miclea, 1999, p. 189).

Maturing "is conceived as a process of development towards functional states more or less stable concluded or considered characteristics of maturity [...] maturation is a qualitative notion of development marked by particular events or conditions ..." (Parot, Doron, 1999, p. 481).

For Goleman, emotional maturity is related to emotional intelligence. The term intelligence comes from the Latin *intelligere*, which is to relate, organize or from the term *interlegere*, which involves establishing relationships between people.

Even the terminology suggests that intelligence overcomes thought which is limited to relations between the objectives and the essential characteristics of phenomena and not relations between people. How complex is this aspect of personality emerges in how it was approached in the history of philosophy and psychology. Views to intelligence ranged from acceptance and highlighting its role in knowledge, to diminish its significance or even to eliminate it from human existence. For Western thought, intelligence appear to be the essential attribute, fundamental for human beings, which makes man what he is, for Eastern thought intelligence was reduced to minimum.

This can be seen in individuals in the areas of their social life, their way of relating and responding to various difficulties of life. They are aware and better control their emotions, have more numerous values and know to recognise them to their own and the others. This emotional intelligence makes people react well in practical life situations faced and act wisely in dealing with others. The author presents emotional intelligence capacity extended to five main areas:

Knowledge of personal emotions – to recognise feeling when it appears, is the cornerstone of emotional intelligence. People who recognize their own feelings have felt more secure in making personal decisions in any field;

Managing emotions - is about mastering emotions so as to be the appropriate capacity to soothe, to get rid of depression, anxiety, irritability. Those who fail to master are constantly confronted with disappointment while emotionally mature individuals can quickly rebalance from obstacles;

Self motivation - concern the emotions serving a purpose to rule and creativity. Emotional self postpone rewards and achievements underlying pulse suppression, increased efficiency and productivity;

Recognizing emotions in others - is done with empathy, the capacity to understand the other, they are mindful of the needs of others;

Handling relations – establishing relations means the ability to manage emotions of others. These capabilities lead to great popularity, to spiritual leadership, effectiveness in interpersonal relationships. (Goleman, 2001, p. 61-62).

Those who hold this emotional intelligence are socially balanced cheerful and do not succumb to fears and concerns.

"Affective maturity indicates the presence of self-control, learning the adaptive ways to situations we face in life." (Radu, 1991, p.126).

Adolescence entails changes not only physical, but also emotional maturity, a phenomenon which in turn involves the finalization of the self knowledge.

The major task of the adolescent is to establish a clear sense of identity. Intellectual skills that they acquired during this period enable them to reflect, to think about who they are and what defines them as a unique person, different from others.

The sense of identity is built around two major areas (APA, 2002):

- *Self-image*: set of beliefs about themselves, including roles, goals, interests, values, religious or political beliefs.

- *Self-esteem*: what the person thinks and feels about his own image. (after Moldovan, Balas-Timar, 2010)

In adolescence is nuanced the emotional life and emotions become more balanced than in puberty. Amid all well and good openness toward positive feelings appear the higher sentiments (intellectual, aesthetic, moral). (after Munteanu, 1997).

Immaturity is "a term usually used to describe the affectivity of a child, teenager or adult, marked by lack of autonomy, need of protection and an exaggerated fixation on the parental image. Overriding interest of the child focuses on his own person in the work field and its benefits. This particularly selfishness manifests itself by susceptible, vanity and stubbornness. Life relationship is also narrow: the development and structuring of personality are limited by the inability to find conflict resolution other than through economic solutions: downloading brutal emotional tension, the manifestation of these tensions in prestige, inhibition or opposition attitudes, defiance or of disinterest, making mental construction thought or active, less organized (mendacity, theft, delinquency) "(Parot, Doron,1999, p.388).

The affective immaturity relates to a lagging behind affective behavior, corresponding to an earlier stage of development. The emotionally immature individual has a "childish" behavior. In most cases, emotional immaturity is being caused by psychogenic overprotection of children and young by the family. Young people with emotional immaturity do not fit optimal school group because between them and the other young people there are differences in emotional experience, so rejection is reciprocal, they are marginalized by the group, are often ridiculed. The young people's immature emotional response is: isolation, absurd rebellion, neurotic, shy, answers that have serious consequences for the future. There are adults of value in scientific fields that have an emotionally immature behavior manifested tby timidity and credulity (Gavrilă-Ardelean, 2008).

Emotional infantilism is as sharp of the emotional immaturity. It can be seen both in people with serious mental disabilities (imbeciles, idiots, dementias) and in normal individuals following a disadvantaged social climate which do not allowed them the affective maturity. A specific form of the emotional infantilism is encountered in hysterical infantilism, dementia, aging, schizophrenia, psychopathes, each manifesting depending on the respective syndrome. (Adams, Berzonsky, 2009).

Research hypothesis

H1: It is assumed that there are significant differences regarding emotional maturity and the level of anxiety (as trait) and the optimism in institutionalized and the non- institutionalized adolescents.

H2: There is a correlation between emotional maturity and the school performances

H3: There is a correlation between emotional maturity and anxiety and optimism.

Theoretical objectives

Capturing differences on emotional maturity, optimism and level of anxiety (trait) between institutionalized and the non- institutionalized children.

Highlighting correlation between emotional maturity and school performance.

Highlighting correlation between emotional maturity and trait anxiety and optimism.

Sample

This study was conducted on a total of 65 participants, students of two classes XII from a high school in Arad namely 29 students, philological profile, non-institutionalized teenagers and 36 institutionalized adolescents in a shelter for minors. Age of students is between 17 and 19 years, the average age being 18, 20 years, of whom 42 were boys and 23 girls.

Methodology

Friedman emotional maturity test

This test assesses the degree of emotional maturity. The test consists of 25 items. For each item there is the options of *yes* or *no* answer. To each answer to each item is given a certain score. At the end of testing, evaluation is made by summing the scores of the right answer. The total score will be divided by 25.

Calibration is to divide the total score on nine levels. The minimum is 8 and the maximum is 25. These levels are: infantilism, infantile psycho side, childish, easy emotional imaturity, limit situation, the tendency towards equilibrium, mediocre maturity, , appropriate maturation, good maturation,

perfectly matured emotional.

At adult it is discussing in terms of emotional balance and imbalance.

Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI X2)

These scales are presented together but the scale used was only the feature. STAI consists of two self-assessment scales for measuring two distinct concepts regarding anxiety. Anxiety (A-state) and trait anxiety. Although originally designed as a research tool for investigating anxiety in adults with psychiatric problems, STAI proved to be useful in measuring anxiety in students and patients in the neuropsychiatric, those in medical clinics or in the service of surgery.

Scale (A-status) consists of 20 descriptions, but the instructions require to the subjects to indicate how they feel at a given time

Scale (A-feature) consists also of 20 descriptions on which people express how they feel in general. Scale (A-status) is a good indicator of the level of transient anxiety felt by customers and patients in counseling, psychotherapy, behavioral therapy or psychiatry.

Scale (A-feature) enables the detection on higher education or college students of the anxiogenic inclinations and of the evaluation of the extension that students encounter problems of neurotic type. A-feature refers to individual differences, stable relationships in propensity to anxiety, differentiating people in the tendency to respond to situations perceived as threatening or increase intensity of anxiety.

Rating

Possible scores for STAI Form X range from a minimum score of 20 points to a maximum score of 80 in both sub-scales A-state and A-feature. Subjects respond to each item of STAI assessing themselves on a 4 point scale. The four categories for scaled-state are: a) all; b) less; c) enough; d) lot. Categories for A-trait scale are: a) almost never; b) at times; c) often; d) almost always. Some items STAI, for example "are tense (a)" are organized such that a rate of 4 indicates a high anxiety while other items, for example, "are well disposed (a)" are organized so a large share indicates a low anxiety. The weights for items whose scores indicate high anxiety levels low are the same as the number circled. For items of Tracks high scores indicating high anxiety weights scores are reversed. Råspunsurillor weighted scores marked 1, 2, 3, 4 for inverse items are 4, 3, 2, 1. Scale-10 items quoted is the reverse state, namely 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16 19 scale-reverse feature has 7 ranked items 1, 6, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19. (Spielberger Gorsuch and Luschene, 2003)

The final score is obtained by summing the classes and can be employed are:

- low level of anxiety - between 21-40
- average level of anxiety - between 41-60

- high level of anxiety - between 61-80

Optimism Scale

The Optimism Scale is a scale of self evaluation that is also called Life Orientation Test and was developed by Scheier and Carver. The scale contains 12 items of which 8 extends optimism. The four items "false" are 2,6,7,10. Response options are number five in complete disagreement (5) to complete the Agreement (1). The final score is obtained by summing the numbers indicating the response taking into account that the items 4, 5 and 11 share reversely. The score obtained is between 8 and 40, the high values indicating the presence of the optimism. The romanian version of the test was performed in Adriana Băban's book "Stress and Personality" in 1998.

Results and discussions

The hypotehesis 1

It is assumed that there are significant differences regarding emotional maturity and the level of anxiety (as trait) and the optimism in institutionalized and the non- institutionalized adolescents.

To test the existence of differences was used Windows 2010 (for editing work) SPSS 17.0 (calculation data). The first step consisted in subjecting interpretation between the type of students and results in emotional maturity tests, trait anxiety and optimism. The results are shown in Table

Pentru a testa existența diferențelor s-a folosit Windows 2010,(pentru redactarea lucrării) SPSS 17.0 (pentru calcularea datelor). Primul demers a constat în a supune interpretării relația dintre tipul de elevi și rezultatele obținute la testele de maturitate emoțională, anxietatea ca trăsătură și optimismul. Rezultatele sunt prezentate în tabelul 1.

Table 1. The results of inferential statistics

		t-test for Equality Of Means						
		t	df	Sig.	Mean diff.	Diff. Std. Error	95% Interval de încredere	
							Inf.	Up
Emoțional maturity	Assumed Variance	-12.67	63	.00	-1.79	.14	-2.07	-1.50
	Non-assumed variance	-13.04	62.83	.00	-1.79	.13	-2.06	-1.51
Anxiety as trait	Assumed Variance	10.94	63	.00	16.78	1.53	13.71	19.84

	Non-assumed variance	10.86	58.31	.00	16.78	1.54	13.69	19.87
Optimism	Assumed Variance	-19.03	63	.00	-17.33	.91	-19.15	-15.51
	Non-assumed variance	-19.40	62.88	.00	-17.33	.89	-19.12	-15.55

The results presented in Table 1, showing the existence of significant differences in emotional maturity ($t = -12.67$, $p = .000$), trait anxiety levels ($t = 10.94$, $p = .000$), level of optimism ($t = -19.03$, $p = .000$).

Table 2. The results of descriptive statistics

	Subjects	N	Means	Std. Dev.	Mean Std. Error
Emotional maturity	institutionalized adolescents	36	16.344	.6277	.1046
	non-institutionalized adolescents	29	18.134	.4783	8.882
Anxiety feature	institutionalized adolescents	36	51.472	5.968	.9948
	non-institutionalized adolescents	29	34.689	6.364	1.181
Optimism	institutionalized adolescents	36	15.972	3.9169	.6528
	non-institutionalized adolescents	29	33.310	3.285	.6101

The results of the Table 2 are plotted in graphical representation obtaining the mean value for the scale of the emotional maturation in Figure 1:

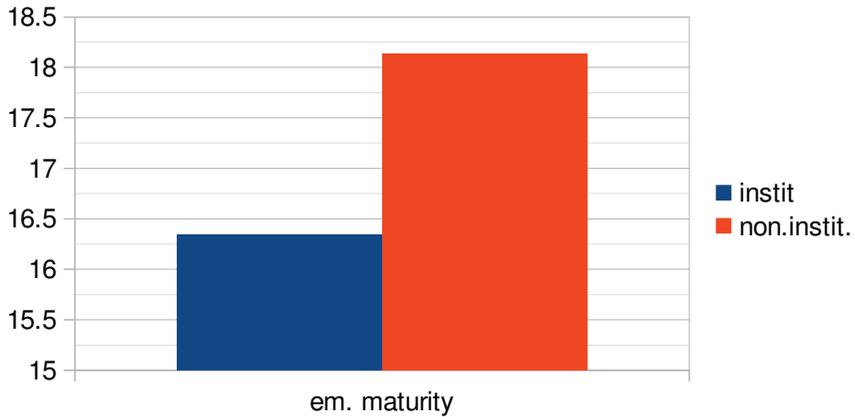


Figure 1. Graphical representation of average values for emotional maturity

Another graphical representation is obtained for average values of trait anxiety inventory (figure 2).

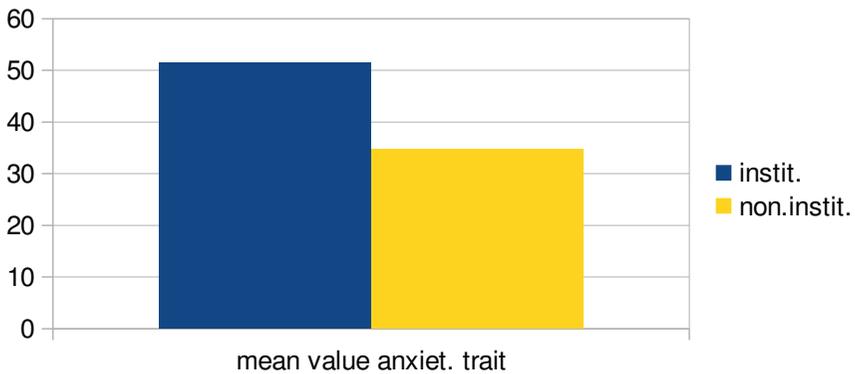


Figure 2. Graphical representation of the mean value for trait anxiety

Also we get a graphical representation of average values for optimism scale (figure 3).

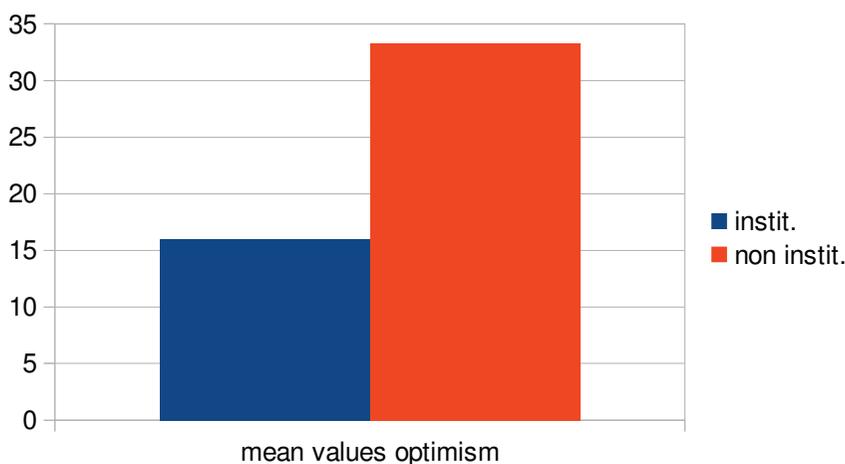


Figure 3. Graphical representation of the mean value for optimism

Comparing the average mark in the emotional maturity of students in function of the kind of institutionalized/non-institutionalized student we see that one of the groups, the institutionalized population is in emotional maturity class with a limit situation - tend towards imbalanced equilibrium, averaging 16.34 and media 18.13 representing the fact that non-institutionalized have a mediocre level of emotional maturity. This result leads us to assume that there is an influence of lifestyles and living conditions of the institutional and the lack of parents that increase the emotional maturity of these children.

Based on this result we can say that there are significant differences between emotional maturity of students, the level of anxiety state as state and as trait, and the optimism, depending on the type of institutionalized/non-institutionalized adolescents. The results show that these differences between the two groups appears also in terms of trait anxiety: the institutionalized adolescents are situated in the class of moderate anxiety being are more anxious as the others, the non-institutionalized adolescents that are situated in the class of reduced anxiety.

Regarding optimism results showed that students in institutions falls into reduced optimism and students non-institutionalized falls are in the class of higher optimism which underlines the fact that institutionalized students even if they are in the same age of turmoil find appropriate ways to cope and to keep a positive tone and an optimistic vision of their own existence. This way of thinking helps in coping with difficult life situations and in better relationship with others; these rational thoughts have as consequences more and appropriate

functional and behavioral adaptive emotions having such a better emotionally maturing, a more correctly evaluation of themselves.

Rational and flexible thinking helps them to have proper visions of the world and a lower level of hostility. Lower levels of anxiety demonstrate that they seek to explain things in reality and when something unknown becomes known, the fear disappears. Thinking is only one factor that can influence emotional maturity.

The institutionalized students have a thinking that causes them to have a vision of reality parties, as a whole, and help them to draw conclusions adapted to their own cognitive schemes and their visions. Interpreting reality after a strategy that confirms their own schemes of thought, often rigid, come to evaluate themselves and the others in a negative way, showing such hostility towards others. In terms of anxiety, they are not looking for logical explanations to phenomena surrounding, all these attitudes having consequences on their cope with the environment and the relations with the others, predisposing them to dysfunctional non-adaptive behaviors and emotions which prevents their emotional maturity.

Hypothesis 2

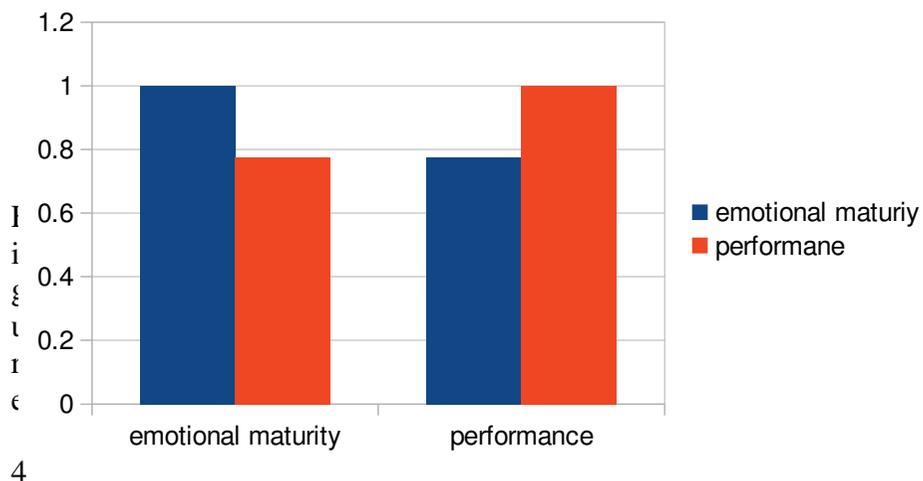
There is a correlation between emotional maturity and the school performances

The inferential results are showed in table 3.

Tabel 3. The results of inferential statistics

		Emotional maturity	School performances
Emotional maturity	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.776 **
	Sig.	.	.000
	N	65	64
School performances	Pearson Correlation	.776**	1.000
	Sig.	.000	.
	N	64	64

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



The graphical representation of the correlation between emotional maturity and school performance

Averages for school performance are shown in table 4.

Table 4. Results of annual averages

	Subjects	N	Average
School performance	institutionalized adolescents	35	7.0571
	non-institutionalized adolescents	29	8.7241

The data in Table 4 and are graphic represented as follows (figure 5)

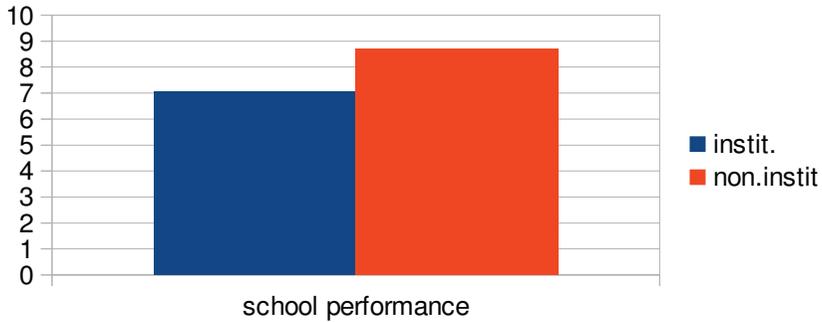


Figure 5. Graphic representation of school performance

Pearson correlation was found to be a positive correlation statistically significant, of the emotional maturity with the learning performance ($r = .776$, at a threshold $p = .000$). Thus, the stated hypothesis has been demonstrated for these two factors studied namely emotional maturity and school performance. This means that when the student presents a low score in terms of the emotional maturity chances are that school performance is low due to the ways non-adaptive life student behaviors and vice versa if they have a high score in emotional maturity the school performance will be increased. Rational thinking facilitates maturation, but the irrational thinking prevents this because lead to dysfunctional emotions and not allow the individual to adapt to difficult situations for him.

Hypothesis 3

There is a correlation between emotional maturity and trait anxiety and optimism.

The inferential results are presented in table 5.

Table 5. The results of inferential statistics

		Emotional maturity	Anxiety as feature	Optimism
Emotional maturity	Corelația Pearson	1.000	-.630**	.790**
	Sig	.	.000	.000
	N	65	65	65
Anxiety as feature	Corelația Pearson	-.630**	1.000	-.677**
	Sig.	.000	.	.000

	N	65	65	65
Optimism	Corelația Pearson	.790**	-.677**	1.000
	Sig.	.000	.000	.
	N	65	65	65

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The values in Table 5 are plotted in the graphical representation of the correlation between the trait anxiety and emotional maturity in Figure 6.

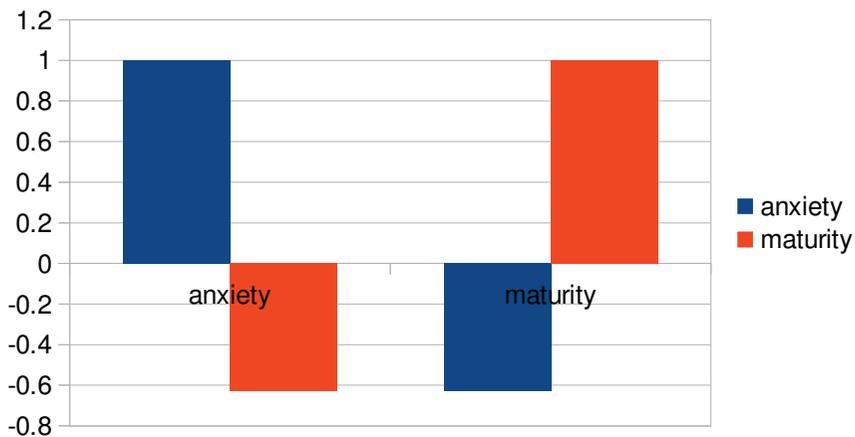


Figure 6. Correlation between emotional maturity and anxiety as trait

Pearson's correlation has been shown to be a negative correlation (inverse) statistically significant between emotional maturity and anxiety as trait ($r = -.630$, at a threshold $p = .000$). This result indicates an increase in emotional maturity when the anxiety (trait) decreases. Lowering anxiety leads to more effective adaptation of students to the environment and a better relationship with others. Both fear of time and fear that manifests a longer period may lead to dysfunctional emotions and biological disorders, to behavioral disorders and even

spiritual disorders.

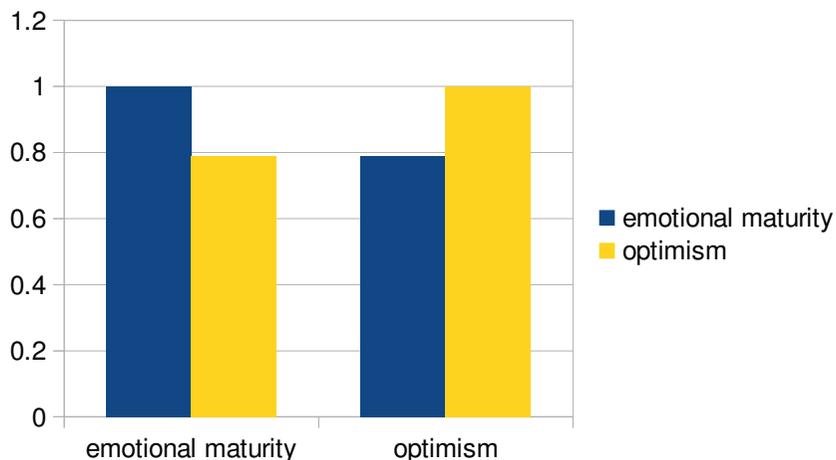


Figure 7. The correlation emotional maturity - optimism

Pearson correlation was found to be a statistically significant positive correlation, between school performances and emotional maturity ($r = .790$, $p = .000$ threshold). Thus, the stated hypothesis has been demonstrated for these two factors studied, emotional maturity and optimism. This means that when the student presents a low score in terms of the emotional maturity chances are that optimism to be low due to the ways non-adaptive life student and vice versa if they have a high score in emotional maturity, optimism is high due to positive thinking and to the control of their own emotions.

It is obtained the following graphical representation for the relationship between anxiety as trait and optimism in Figure 8

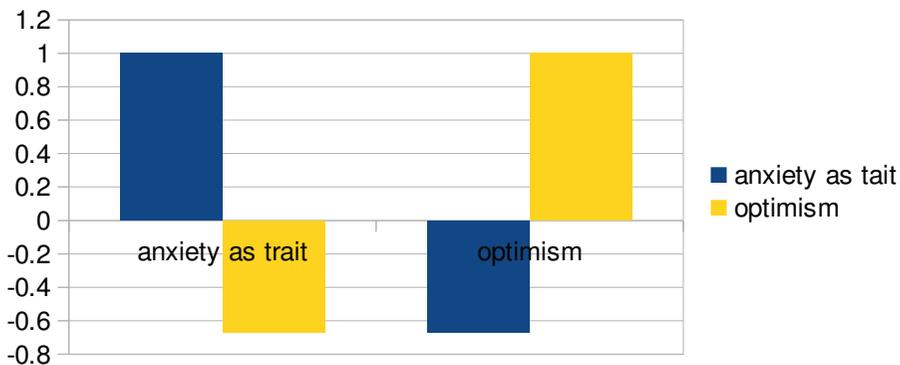


Figure 8. The correlation

between anxiety as trait and optimism

Pearson correlation was shown to be a negative correlation (reverse)

statistically significant between trait anxiety and optimism ($r = - .677$, at a threshold $p = .000$). This test result indicates an increase in the values of optimism when the level of anxiety (trait) decreases. Lowering anxiety leads to more effective adaptation of students to the environment and better relationship with others. Trait anxiety entails distrust their capacities to deal with the situation and that manifests an extended period can lead both to dysfunctional emotions and biological disorders, behavioral disorders and even spiritual. Positive thinking, the optimistic look on the encountered situations in life student or interrelationships at school and outside leads to find adaptive ways to lower anxiety as a students' feature and increase confidence in their powers to use appropriately the personal resources.

Bad mood, dissatisfaction, loneliness, fear, inability to concentrate, feeling of inferiority, irritability, emotional outbursts, impulsiveness, tolerance impaired frustration, lack of inhibition - high levels regarding these events show a low emotional maturity which can lead to high levels of anxiety as trait and low levels of optimism.

Conclusions

The study was conducted on a number of 65 subjects from which 36 non-institutionalized and 29 of in institutions, aged between 17 and 19 years old.

The first hypothesis aims if there are differences between the two groups of students to determine the level of emotional maturity, trait anxiety and optimism. The second hypothesis proposes also to highlight the correlation between emotional maturity and school performance. The third hypothesis proposes to highlight the correlation between emotional maturity and trait anxiety and optimism. All three assumptions are confirmed and draw attention to some of the effects of the emotional maturity which are felt in the field of self-perception or in the plan of relating with others. Correlations pursued warn that between emotional maturity and school performance is a direct relationship and between school performance and anxiety there is an inverse correlation.

Differences obtained at the hypothesis 1 for the studied factors were significant, so we can think that there is the possibility of multiple factors than those studied which influence the emotional maturity of adolescents, some of them being whether or not there is a family environment, and the various facets of the cultural environment from where the subjects come.

Regarding the second hypothesis is assumed that the relations between emotional maturity and school performance, was confirmed.

The third hypothesis, that supposed relationships between emotional maturity and anxiety as trait and optimism, and also between the latter two are found that emotional maturity correlates positively with optimism and negatively with anxiety and the optimism correlates negative with anxiety

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