

## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM IN TEENAGERS

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**Abstract:** *This paper represents an experimental study whose purpose is to highlight aspects of development of emotional intelligence and self-esteem inside the teenagers group through particular activities which includes specific games for the development of the personality. The study was made by a sample composed by 25 high school students with age between 15 -17, and consisted in a psychological evaluation in two steps and a pedagogical intervention between this two. The conclusions highlight the importance of using specific games for the development of the personality, specifically, emotional intelligence and self-esteem.*

**Key words:** *emotional intelligence, self-esteem, teenagers, interactive games, development*

It is considered that personal development, if viewed in the light of emotional intelligence, brings obvious results, valuable in students' lives. Emotional intelligence allows people not to deny their feelings, to be actively involved and to fulfill their own goals without unnecessary use of psychical energy. They are able to communicate their emotions, feelings, decreasing, in this way, the possibility of psychosomatic symptoms as a result of strained, conflictual events. More than that, the ability to recognize and deal with emotions leads to higher performance at school, at work and in human relationships. Considering how important is self-esteem and emotional intelligence for adolescents, we aim through this experimental study, to highlight the relationship between the two, using the game as a way of fostering.

### **1. Theoretical study**

Self-esteem is considered to be an evaluative component of self-concept (Adler, Stewart, in collaboration with the Psychosocial Working

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Group, 2004). Self-esteem is a component of the cognitive pattern concerning the self. Rosenberg (1965) defines self-esteem as a global evaluation of one person, as a wider representation of the self that includes cognitive, emotional, appreciative issues. Self-esteem is the attitude that describes the degree to which the person has a tendency to positively evaluate himself / herself and to reject negative attributes (Baban, 2008). Self-esteem is conceptualized as a cognitive characteristic of self-defence and reinforcement (Kaplan, apud Baban, 2008).

Concerning emotional intelligence, in R. Bar-On's conception (1992 apud Roco, 2004), emotional intelligence depends on the following five intrapersonal factors (awareness of self emotions, assertiveness, personal fulfillment, independence), interpersonal factors (empathy, positive interpersonal relationships, social responsibilities), adaptability (flexibility, reality testing, problem solving), stress control, the ability to maintain a positive emotional mood even in adverse, tensed situations.

Mixed-pattern of approaching the emotional intelligence is theorized by D. Goleman (2008). Besides emotional intelligence as personal skill, there are added social skills, personality traits and behaviors. We are thus witnessing an extension of the concept of emotional intelligence, involving variables that appear to be more personality or character traits - optimism, perseverance, the ability to delay satisfaction, thoroughness. In the D. Goleman's opinion, defining elements of emotional intelligence are (2008): self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, social skills.

Therefore D. Goleman (2008) suggests several ways to practise the main dimensions of emotional intelligence: awareness of self- emotions, control of emotions, personal motivation, empathy, all these favors the managing of interpersonal relationship

Steve Hein (1996) tries an overview of emotional intelligence based on the latest papers on the subject. In his book, published in 1996, he offers several alternative definitions (like all the other authors who have added their own contribution to the "confusion" about emotional intelligence).

Emotional intelligence means:

- to be aware of what you feel, what others feel and to know what to do in connection with that;
- to distinguish between what is good and bad for yourself and to learn how to pass from a bad situation to a good one;
  - to own the emotional awareness, sensitivity and ability to help yourself in order to maximize happiness and survival on long-term.

### **1. The design of research**

This research was an experimental study aimed to test the emotional intelligence and self-esteem before and after a four-month intervention, during which the psychological game was used as a specific method.

### **2. The objectives of research:**

The main objective of this research was to highlight the extent to which the use of games for personality development, influence the development of emotional intelligence and self-esteem at 16 year old adolescents.

Specific objectives:

1. The identification of emotional intelligence level and self-esteem at 16 year old adolescents.
2. Stimulation of emotional intelligence and self-esteem at 16 year old adolescents by using specific games.

### **3. Hypotheses of the research:**

1. If there are played specific games for personality development, the emotional intelligence can be developed within the group of adolescents.
2. If there are played specific games for personality development, the self-esteem can be developed within the group of adolescents.

### **4. Participans**

The subjects of this research were 25 students (11 girls and 14 boys) with average age of 16 years , 10<sup>th</sup> grade at The Orthodox Theological Seminary in Arad.

### **5. Method and materials**

Tests Method - The test for emotional intelligence (child version), Unconditional Self Acceptance Questionnaire - USAQ and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale - RSE (1965).

### **6. Procedure**

In order to test the first hypothesis of the research there are studied emotional intelligence (the dependent variable) and intervention through game ( the independent variable). For the second hypothesis of the study, the variables studied are self-esteem (dependent variable) and intervention through game (independent variable). Thus, for the two hypotheses the design will be a unifactorial one and the data will be analyzed by t test for dependent samples.

The research procedure has aimed initially to choose the students who are to take part in the study. The students have been tested for measuring and determining the level of emotional intelligence and self-esteem, and have been invited to attend the first meeting, which will consider the

implementation of the first game, where everyone present will meet each other.

The activity was conducted over a period of about four months, starting on 01.02.2012. This consisted in implementation of specific games aimed to develop emotional intelligence and self-esteem, depicted below. Most meetings were held in a classroom, but also in nature (park, school yard). All activities were conducted after a plan established from the beginning, but in the same flexible depending on existing situations in the classroom. There were organized the following games, taken and further worked from the book "83 psychological games for the management of groups" by Sabina Manes. There were used four types of games: *games to develop communication and self-awareness, games to develop perception and creativity, games to develop capacity of affirmation and games to develop movement and body expression.*

### **ACTION PLAN**

<b>Date</b>	<b>The Game</b>	<b>The Objective</b>
01.02	- Self-presentation  - Emotions expressed using the body	- meeting the others and coming at the first meeting of the group  - sending messages using nonverbal communication
06.02	- Self-portrait	- meeting the others and presenting yourself
13.02	- Polifem's Eye	- undertaking your own behaviour methods
20.02	- I wish you...  - Prepositions and adverbs	- knowing ones desires and fears in relationship with the others  - stimulating imagination and creativity in writing. Facilitating the self expression
27.02	- The Blind and the guide	- encourage contact and trust in each other. Stimulation of tactile perception in exploring the surrounding space
05.03	- My name	- stimulating the imagination and creativity in writing. Facilitating self-knowledge and the others

12.0 3	- The full stop	- stimulating the imagination and creativity in writing. Facilitating self-knowledge and the others
19.0 3	- My portrait	- not having any difficulty in analyzing their own personality and express their opinions about themselves and the rest, think and accept the others criticism
26.0 3	- What animal are you?	- to understand how others see us in relation to how we see ourselves
02.0 4	- The way of expressing yourself and listening	- acquiring the ability to recognize methods in order to express problems and the ability to detect the others problems
09.0 4	- My journey by..	- stimulating the imagination and creativity in writing. Facilitating communication and interpersonal relationships within the group
19.0 4	- How the others see us and how we see ourselves	- observation and awareness of the positive and negative aspects of the own personalities and of the others
30.0 4	- Express your disbelief	- the expression of distrust
07.0 5	- Reaction to criticism	- learning how to react to criticism
14.0 5	- Dialogue using gestures	- stimulating of nonverbal communication. Facilitating interpersonal relationships
22.0 5	- Pancinello's story	- self confidence

The first test (T1) took place on January 16; all three tests were applied on the same day, starting with the most difficult one ( as number of items) and ending with one that does not require too much concentration: Unconditional Self Acceptance Questionnaire - USAQ, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale - RSE (1965), the test for emotional intelligence.

The second test (T2) was on May 28 and it the same model as in T1 was used.

At first I presented descriptive data obtained from variables covered by the two hypotheses (Table 2).

**Table 2 Descriptive data obtained from the used variables**

	No. Persons	Media	Ab. standard
<b>IE (T1)</b>	25	80,2000	27,02160
<b>IE (T2)</b>	25	1,0000E2	19,94785
<b>USAQ (T1)</b>	25	80,3200	8,29015
<b>USAQ (T2)</b>	25	88,7600	7,70433
<b>RSE (T1)</b>	25	16,8800	1,96469
<b>RSE (T2)</b>	25	19,1600	1,97231
Valid N (listwise)	25		

Differences in scores on emotional intelligence and self-esteem before applying intervention through game (first test - T1) and after the intervention through game (second test - T2) will be tested using t-test for dependent samples.

First hypothesis:

Table number 3 contains the results of t-test for emotional intelligence during the two test phases (T1 and T2). T- point ( $p < 0.05$ ) shows that there are significant differences in the results at T2 (t significant if  $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 3.**

T test for paired samples (Test for emotional intelligence - version for children)

	Paired Differences			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error			
Pair 1 IE1 - IE2	-1,98000E1	25,55550	5,11110	-3,874	24	,001

Analysing the data we can see that it was achieved a significant t ( $t(24) = -3.874, p < 0.001$ ) which means that we can say that there are significant differences in scores between emotional intelligence measurements at T1 and at T2. The differences in the emotional intelligence between initial testing and testing after implementation of intervention are clear enough to say that the chances occur by chance are less than 5%. We can say that the effect of the intervention through game has significant influence on the development of emotional intelligence.

Second hypothesis:

Table 4 and Table 5 contain the t test results for self-esteem (unconditional acceptance of self - USAQ and self-esteem RSE) in the two test phases (T1 and T2). T point ( $p < 0.05$ ) shows that there are significant differences in results at T2 (for both tests).

**Table 4.** Test for paired samples

(Questionnaire of unconditional acceptance of oneself - USAQ)

	Paired Differences			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Pair 1 USAQ1 - USAQ2	-8,44000	8,21624	1,64325	-5,136	24	,000

Analysing the data we can see that it was obtained a significant t ( $t(24) = -5.136, p < 0.000$ ) which means that we can say that there are significant differences in self-esteem scores (USAQ) between measurements at T1 and T2. The differences observed at USAQ level between the initial testing and testing after application of intervention are clear enough to say that the chances they occur by chance are less than 5%. We can say that the effect of the intervention through game has significant influence on the development of emotional intelligence. (USAQ).

**Table 5.** T test for paired samples ( Rosenberg Scale)

	Paired Differences			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Pair 1 RSE1 - RSE2	-2,28000	1,86011	,37202	-6,129	24	,000

Analyzing the data we can see that it was obtained a significant t (t (24) = -6.129, p <0, 000) which means that we can say that there are significant differences in scores on self-esteem (RSE) between measurements at T1 and at T2. Specifically the differences between the initial self-esteem and after the intervention are clear enough to say that chances they occur by chance are less than 5%. We can say that the effect of the intervention through game has significant influence on the development of self-esteem.

**Table 6.** Correlations

		USAQ1	USAQ2	stimaros1	stimaros2
USAQ1	Pearson Correlation	1	,474*	,898**	,364
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,017	,000	,074
	N	25	25	25	25
USAQ2	Pearson Correlation	,474*	1	,422*	,683**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,017		,036	,000
	N	25	25	25	25
stimaros1	Pearson Correlation	,898**	,422*	1	,554**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,036		,004
	N	25	25	25	25
stimaros2	Pearson Correlation	,364	,683**	,554**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,074	,000	,004	
	N	25	25	25	25



**Table 6.** Correlations

		USAQ1	USAQ2	stimaros1	stimaros2
USAQ1	Pearson Correlation	1	,474*	,898**	,364
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,017	,000	,074
	N	25	25	25	25
USAQ2	Pearson Correlation	,474*	1	,422*	,683**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,017		,036	,000
	N	25	25	25	25
stimaros1	Pearson Correlation	,898**	,422*	1	,554**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,036		,004
	N	25	25	25	25
stimaros2	Pearson Correlation	,364	,683**	,554**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,074	,000	,004	
	N	25	25	25	25

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

**Table 6** is a Pearson correlation between USAQ and Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSE) test results. There are significant correlations between the two tests.

### Conclusions

The idea of this study started from the major role the emotional intelligence and self-esteem have within the group of adolescents. To this, was added the idea that the game could be a factor leading to the development of both concepts already mentioned. In order to see how the two variables are influenced, we covered three main steps in the experiment: initial testing of emotional intelligence and self-esteem (T1), intervention by specific games for personality development and final testing (T2) for the same variables, with the same tools that were used as for the first test. The research objectives were fulfilled using the activity within the four months:

students were tested and then introduced into specific programme of the the experiment.

The study hypotheses were confirmed, cause - game - led to the development of the two dimensions - emotional intelligence and self-esteem - these result from the evaluation with t test, and the observations made throughout the experiment. The most important observations arise from five subjects, four have achieved remarkably large differences in scores between T1 and T2 and one subject had a small decrease between tests.

Regarding the limitations of the study, one limit could be the diversity of games, as a greater variety of games would have motivated the subjects, but automatically would have influenced more the development of the two variables. Duration of intervention could be another limit. Four months were enough to demonstrate that specific game for personality development (only in research ) can influences the two dependent variables, but if the frequency and duration of intervention were longer and specific games for personality development were unfold during an optional hours of the school year, students progress would be bigger and even more diverse. One of the subjects showed a little progress, the reason may be an external factor (death of a parent). In this case the limit is again the fact that we did not take into account of external factors, that can also influence.

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