

# Emotional Intelligence as a Factor Affecting the Application of Secondary Vocational School Graduates in Practice

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## **Abstract**

The contribution deals with emotional intelligence as a factor influencing the practice of graduates of secondary vocational schools in practice. It points to the importance of basic and social abilities such as self-awareness, self-control, empathy, motivation to higher goals, dexterity in social interaction. At the same time, the contribution presents the activities and tools of the project aimed at creating a model for the development of the emotional intelligence of pupils of secondary vocational schools, as well as the views of teachers of secondary vocational schools on the development of the emotional intelligence of pupils at secondary vocational schools.

## *Keywords:*

Emotional intelligence  
Secondary vocational school  
Practice  
Project

## **1 Introduction**

Preparing pupils at secondary vocational schools should lead to their successful application in life - in working, social and family life. A common phenomenon in practice is that the pupils with the best results at school are not the most successful ones. The success and application in the life of a person does not only decide the acquired knowledge. Additional capabilities that affect our deployment have been identified. It is self-awareness, self-control, empathy, motivation to higher goals, dexterity in social interaction. These basic emotional and social abilities are referred to as emotional intelligence.

## **2 Emotional intelligence**

The rapid transformation of our times puts people in ever greater demands. The acquired expertise becomes obsolete (Belz, Siegrist, 2011). The current world is characterized by rapid changes, an explosion of information, and a rapid pace of innovation, particularly information, which is steadily accelerating. Competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes) that are focused only on one specific situation are rapidly obsolete

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and become useless (Turek, 2008). Therefore, in all developed countries of the world, it is an effort to find, define, and to develop competences that are usable in most (and still non-existent) professions that enable the individual to occupy several positions and functions, to practice different professions suited to solving many unpredictable problems and enabling the individual to successfully cope with rapid changes in work, personal and social life. Such competencies are called key competences (Turek, 2010).

Key competencies should serve to address many and diverse issues, in different contexts, to achieve multiple goals, to be applied not only in different professions but also in different areas of human activity: at school, at work, in social and personal life. The acquisition and improvement of key competences are seen as a lifelong learning process, not only in school, but also in employment, family, cultural, social and political life, etc. Acquiring key competencies is not just a matter of personal effort, but requires a favourable social and ecological environment (Hrmo, Turek, 2003).

In recent years, the new concept of emotional intelligence has emerged in terms of abilities. The study of emotional intelligence was conditioned by the experience that even highly intelligent individuals fail in situations where they have to deal with less common problems in their own application. These are, in particular, activities that are essentially interpersonal communication, working with people (teachers, managers, etc.). Experience has shown that even highly intelligent individuals may have problems in education, skills and interpersonal relationships, if they lack the capacity of interpersonal communication (Kačáni, Bucková, 2001).

Valihorová and Lajčiaková (2010) point out that general intelligence, as stated by Sternberg (2000), is a complex of cognitive dispositions to solve practical and theoretical problems. However, in practical life, we also need to solve the problems relating to human relations, which require more than pure general intelligence. Valihorová and Lajčiaková (2010) emphasise that the development of a construct seems to be of key importance. It is what Thorndike described as social intelligence, Goleman as emotional intelligence and Bar-On as emotional and social intelligence.

We also share the views published by Gajdošová, Herényiová (2006), Gabrhelová (2016), Barnová, Tamášová, Krásna (2019) and Szőköl (2015) regarding the need to develop emotional intelligence and key competences of pupils.

We consider the model Goleman (2000) adapted to the more practical version of Salovey and Mayer, where the role of emotional intelligence in the world of work is more prominent. His adaptation includes a total of five basic emotional and social capabilities:

- Self-awareness. To know what at a given moment we feel, know how to apply our own preferences in decision making, realistically estimate our own capabilities and abilities, act with legitimate self-confidence.
- Self-control. Directing your emotions so that they become a motor rather than a brake of action in the sense of heading towards the goals set. Consciousness, the ability to postpone satisfaction in order to achieve far-reaching goals; the ability to quickly get rid of emotional stress.
- Motivation. In the spirit of the most preferencel to aim at the goal, with their help to try to take over the initiative, to constantly increase the demands on oneself and to demonstrate resilience to failures and disappointments.
- Empathy. Experience the feelings of others, be able to look at the trouble through their eyes, have friendly relationships to the widest circle of people.
- Social skills. To manage your own emotions, to accurately estimate the various social relationships and situations; (Goleman, 2000), to learn how to use society's agility to persuade, to lead people, to be able to apply it in negotiations and reconciliation tactics, in order to cooperate and team work.

These abilities are important for the practice of graduates of secondary vocational schools in practice.

As stated by Valihorová and Lajčiaková (2010), emotional intelligence later affects the working process and the whole scale of interpersonal relationships. Currently, it seems beneficial to deal with the issue of emotional intelligence even before taking up a job. The authors claim that school is the right place for a systematic

promotion of knowledge and development of emotional intelligence. Attending school is a natural everyday activity for pupils, and therefore development of emotional intelligence should be part of it.

We consider it necessary to address the above topic and we are currently dealing with it in the KEPA project no. 004DTI-4/2018 Model that will support the development of emotional intelligence of pupils at secondary vocational schools.

### 3 Project Model that will support the development of emotional intelligence of pupils at secondary vocational schools

The issues related to the development of key competences and emotional intelligence were dealt with in the following stages:

We focused on the analysis of the current state of development of emotional intelligence, interpersonal, communication, personal competences of pupils at secondary vocational schools in SR.

On the basis of the results and information obtained, the views of teachers and pupils will be analyzed by the current situation at secondary vocational schools in the SR in the area of the given issue.

The final stage will be focused on creating a model for the development of the emotional intelligence of pupils in secondary vocational schools, formulating recommendations and creating training materials for teachers of secondary vocational schools.

Prior to realizing the research itself, we found the views of 129 teachers of secondary vocational schools in Slovakia on the issue of developing the emotional intelligence of pupils at secondary vocational schools. The results obtained are shown in Table 1.

Opinions of teachers of secondary vocational schools to develop the emotional intelligence of pupils at secondary vocational schools within the framework of the teaching process	Number	%
a) I strongly agree	47	36,43
b) I do not agree	68	52,71
c) I can not say it	12	9,30
d) I do not agree	2	1,55
e) I strongly disagree	0	0

**Table 1:** Opinions of teachers of secondary vocational schools to develop the emotional intelligence of pupils at secondary vocational schools as part of the teaching process

In the research itself, we use the tools created and selected: The TEIQue-SF Interactive Intelligence Questionnaire (K. V. Petrides, London Psychometric Laboratory, University College London, Slovak Republic; Student's questionnaire for the analysis of the current state in relation to the development of emotional intelligence and the identification of requirements for the teaching process at secondary vocational schools in Slovakia, NEO Five-Person Personality Inventory (according to NEO Five-Factor Inventory PT Costu and RR McCrae, first Slovak edition - Imrich Ruisel, Peter Halama) and Teacher Questionnaire for the Analysis of the Current Situation in the Development of Emotional Intelligence and the Study of Requirements for the Teaching Process at Secondary Technical Schools in the Slovak Republic.

The results of evaluating the global level of feature emotional intelligence as well as the assessment of four factors of emotional intelligence showed that pupils of secondary vocational schools in Slovakia achieved a high score in the dimensions of well-being and sociability.

The research results will have been processed by the end of the year 2019, thereby meeting the project aim, i.e. to carry out analysis of the current state of secondary vocational schools in the SR in relation to developing emotional intelligence of pupils, and to propose a model for the emotional intelligence development.

## 4 Conclusion

We consider it important nowadays to pay attention to the development of the emotional intelligence of pupils of secondary vocational schools in relation to their better application in practice. We deal with the topic of the project solution and we assume the following application of the outcomes and benefits in social, and economic practice: design of a model to support the development of emotional intelligence of pupils of secondary vocational schools; formulation of recommendations in the given area, creation of educational material for teachers of secondary vocational schools; teachers of secondary vocational schools will receive guidance to create the basis for developing the emotional intelligence of pupils at secondary vocational schools in the Slovak Republic; on the basis of the model of support for the development of the emotional intelligence of pupils in secondary vocational schools (formulated recommendations, training material for teachers of secondary vocational schools), teachers of secondary vocational schools will be able to apply the model even after the end of the project solution period; measurement tools for current state analysis at secondary vocational schools in the Slovak Republic in connection with the development of pupils' emotional intelligence and the identification of stakeholders' requirements will be able to be used repeatedly in the future; the results of the research can be the basis for further decision-making by the management of secondary vocational schools.

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