

RELEVANT STAGES OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE DURING PREADOLESCENCE

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Abstract: *The praxiological significance of this article lies within the analysis and classification of relevant aspects of the emotional intelligence development during preadolescence. Accordingly, the focus has been set on determining the development process of emotional intelligence during preadolescence, of knowledge and own skills assimilation of this psychological construct, as well as the identification of the determining factors. Preadolescence is the period of great changes at biological, cognitive, and social experiences levels, and EQ's development has solid implications in human communication, inter-personal relationships and more, being a capacity with profound social implications. Emotional intelligence is seeded and developed throughout the entire life, and it allows to show our intellectual capabilities and our creativity, assuring success both in personal and professional life.*

Key words: *emotional intelligence; development; pre-teenagers; personality; emotion; family.*

1. Introduction

The evolution of contemporary social transformations requires an adaptive competence of the pre-teenager at the environment, which can only take place where the imperial role of using emotions intelligently is understood. The modern doctrines with respect to emotional intelligence have progressed over the simple fact that the individual is generally in a continuous development. A large part of the population ignores the emotional aspect of our intelligence, considering that academic intelligence comes first in obtaining performance, without taking into account the important role of emotional intelligence.

Worldwide studies have settled that the main factor which impacts the achievement of success is represented by emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is a durable change, a dynamic phenomenon, an essential factor which improves human behaviour over the whole duration of life. The benefits of developing emotional intelligence are various: it offers a way of “settlement of frequently dealt with issues: conflict management, collaboration with others, solving emotional problems” (Rosca, C., 2015), strengthens the personality through assuring an emotional balance, a developed interior force, in order to maintain an optimistic perspective of life.

Emotional intelligence contributes to the efficiency of human activity, determining his performances in various fields, choosing multilateral directions of development, increasing the degree of responsibility in making decisions and performing tasks, both in individual personal life and the social and professional one. Emotional intelligence promotes wellbeing, being one of the main factors which facilitates an interpersonal relationship. Emotional intelligence represents a conglomeration of overriding factors, which intertwine as follows: self-awareness, emotions control, motivation, empathy and social relationships. Self-awareness and knowledge represent the basis of emotional intelligence.

2. Relevant aspects of developing emotional intelligence during preadolescence

Although emotional intelligence starts to develop since early childhood, preadolescence is the appropriate stage because the preadolescence age represents the most sensitive part of society, one of the most complicated periods of development. Preadolescence or puberty is the period between 10/11-14/15 years old. (Frătilă, I., 1998, Golu, F. 2015).

“The preadolescent age is considered the age between childhood and maturity, an intermediate stage between childhood and adult life, which happens differently for each person, but ends in the same result – maturity” (Racu, I., Racu, 2013).

This period presents multiple challenges of social development and a stage of significant physical and endocrine changes, making this period especially profound as far as emotional experiences are concerned, with frequent modifications of disposition. The pre-teenager has a specific behaviour that, more often than not, manifests through unexpected reactions. This is owed to the fact that preadolescence is the stage where the system of interests, personal values, moral orientations are formed, and a deep analysis and rigorous appreciation of accumulated individual experience and

determining the life position towards people and society is revised. (Racu, I., Racu, 2007).

The preadolescence period is influenced by various internal and external factors, which can lead to confusing the pre-teenager, with the chance of indoctrination of a false belief system, inconsistent with social expectations, leaning towards conflict and social inadaptability. The modifications at subjective level (experiencing emotion), cognitive level (the quality of emotion experience), biological/physiological level (the actual changes), behavioural level (emotional expression), are in fact, emotions. They assure our survival, as a warning signal, when the instinct goes missing. The most evident dimension of emotion is the subjective one, being the result of the other three levels accumulated changes. Emotions represent the direct and immediate effect of the way we see events, and the emotions we cross throughout our lives. (Lemeni, G., Miclea, M., 2004).

The psychic transformation is impetuous and with different internal misunderstandings, because of maintaining a continuous state of agitation, bustle, impulsivity, restlessness, and anxiety. "The pre-teenagers' emotional traits are much richer and nuanced due to the various activities and interpersonal relationships they sustain. Pre-teenagers experiment some significant investments at an emotional level, often outside of family, in friendships" (Paladi, A., 2018).

All these transformations require the capacity to emotionally self-regulate; they are having no flexibility. The pre-teenager tends towards to social environment, looks for groups that will satisfy its need of affiliation, socialisation, and emotional security. The ability of making friends is one of the basis objectives of development at this age. The opinion of fellow students and friends has the most weight. All psychical functions of the general individual come as a result from interiorising social relationships.

During preadolescence all the self-awareness dimensions constitute of:

- Cognitive dimension (knowledge of our own qualities and traits);
- Affective dimension (personal emotions and feelings, self-respect);
- Behavioural dimension (refers to practical manifestation, in conduct, relations of these acquisitions of attitude towards self)

Under the aspect of affective life, preadolescence is marked by emotional instability, alternation in contrast of the affective evolution stages and even affective hypersensitivity. (Racu I, 2005). Unfortunately, emotional development is treated superficially, as it was understood by itself. Understanding emotions is of major importance. They must be known, understood, and ultimately, controlled. The given period is characterised by conflicting communication and the fight for autonomy, position, and acceptance (Bolboceanu, A., 2005).

During this period the first sexual experiences begin, becoming independent from the familial environment. The parental authority drops while the importance of the social group rises, the development of ability to properly communicate takes place simultaneously with the social capabilities. This is a period of life where the pre-teenager is the main standard in establishing the self-concept. At this stage, they no longer ask support from parents, but from colleagues and friends (Golu, P., Verza, E., Zlate, M., 2005, Schiopu, U., Verza, E., 1995).

The ability to understand thoughts, feelings, situations, opinion views of others develop step-by-step, when pre-teenagers become less egocentric, and more prepared to recognise and coordinate the multiple dimensions of interpersonal experiences (Astington, J., 1993, Wedeck, J., 1947). The typical egocentricity of this period makes the pre-teenager extremely self-centred, incapable of taking into account others' perspective. Relationships and communications with people take an important role in pre-teenager lives (Paladi, A., 2018). The most frequent form of human interaction is represented by communication.

Piaget J.'s studies highlight three factors which determine the development process: growing up, the empirical experience received from the physical environment and the action of the social environment (Goleman, D., 2001).

The development of the ability to assume the appropriate age social perspectives are essential because they involve the shift of personality the pre-teenager goes through in understanding the concept of friends, people with influence, peer groups and self-awareness (Selman, R., 1980).

During the process of reaching maturity, the pre-teenager evolves step-by-step in developing reflection capabilities, self-knowledge, inter-knowledge, which facilitate the development of empathy, communication skills and the ability to solve problems (Chandler, M. J., 1973, Mendelsohn, M., Straker, G., 1999).

Pre-teenagers act uncertain towards all kinds of temptations, and this leads to incorrectness and mistakes. They end up breaking rules because they are not ready to deal with the complex experiences coming their way, lived first-hand. The incapacity to control emotions determines a state of uncertainty, which can usually lead to anxious states, apathy and even depression. The most efficient way of preventing these types of situations is developing emotional intelligence. This shows a positive transformation of the pre-teenager behaviour and his attitude towards self and others, this being essential for achieving efficient communication at an emotional level (Lemeni, G., Miclea, M., 2004).

Developing emotional intelligence is a spontaneous, natural process, which develops gradually out of the pre-teenager life experience. Developing

intelligence at pre-teenager age takes place under important factors, one of them being social interaction, which manifests through different type of help and support from the adults. The social connection begins the path towards the establishing language, is the foundation and permits intellectual processes, through which the pre-teenager can adopt its beliefs, values, and other attitudes, consciously or unconsciously, in his ulterior development, which automatically operates as verbal thinking. This development pattern in which the intellectual processes move from the exterior (social) to interior, Vîgotschi calls “the generic law of cultural development” (Goleman, D., 2001).

Human capabilities and their progressive evolution depend on the social and institutional context, where the individual preoccupation takes place: environment, group, individual development, and learning being tightly connected and co-dependent. The capacity to invest, anticipate events and behaviours represent one of the emotional intelligence components. The social context and cohabitated experiments mark the base orientation of personality.

The researcher D. Cristea (2015) mentions that is necessary to consider the following relation: “...The behaviour is the result of dynamic interaction between the subject responsibility and the characteristics of the social situation where he is placed.” (Cristea, D., 2015).

As far as reciprocal influences between the social environment and personality traits are concerned, Gerald M., Deary Ian J., Whiteman Martha C. (2005) mentions: “...developing personality is a two-sided road. The external social environment could influence the development of personality, but the child interacts with it actively and created his own social experience” (Gerald, M., Deary, I.J., Whiteman, M.C., 2005). Social relationships are the foundation in constructing self-awareness.

Individual differences in developing emotional intelligence manifest according to the pre-teenager experiential route and on the basis of parent-child relationship (Vlas, G., 1992).

“During puberty, irritability, instability, explosivity are found, all being characteristic to manifesting emotions and are at the basis of some conflicts with parents” (Paladi, A., 2018).

Family represents the prerequisite of general and emotional development of the pre-teenager, of his intellectual and moral training. Family is definitory is developing emotional intelligence. It represents a dynamic inter-relational system, expressed through mutual exchange of psychological needs between family members, and the promotion of an efficient parental model with positive attitudes favours the harmonious and integrated development of the child (Pellegrini, D.S., 1985).

The familial context is the first school of emotional intelligence development. The parents represent the main imitation model of their children. The relational method of the family, its affective climate and its socio-cultural model are essential for social insertion and forming social behaviours (Vlas, G., 1992). "Family represents a superior form of community – mainly the husband, wife and children – which relies on social and biological relationships, having as main goal to prepare the future generation, healthy and highly educated, leading to society development" (Banciu, D., Radulescu, S.M, Voicu M, 1987). As a result, pre-teenagers who live in a familial environment characterised by empathy, will gain appropriate models in developing emotionally healthy competencies.

The parents who do not answer pre-teenager needs generate an uncertain and avoiding attachment, stopping the emotional expression of their children. The conflicts between parents traumatise the child's mind. The behaviour of these families precludes the development of controlling capabilities of their own emotions, as well as others'.

Considering the impact of the family in forming the pre-teenager personality, we can assume that his emotional intelligence will be determined by his family's communication style, the parents' attitude, the transited values and the psychological climate inside the family. The emotional style is tightly connected of the quality of affective relationship in the family. The pre-teenager learns to relate with the complexity of the social world, tries to understand others' feelings, to be empathic, develop ideas about others' ideas, emotions, and intentions. (Golu, M., 2007).

Pre-teenagers with a high degree of emotional intelligence adapts easier in social environment conditions which are always changing, succeeding to adapt to pressure, intense and difficult changes they face in this period of their lives (Papalia, D., Wendkos O., Duskin F, R., 2010). A high emotional coefficient indicates that the person is in touch with their feelings, that they have a good relationship with themselves, that they have a positive view about live and can reach their potential. This person understands how others feel, has the capacity to solve their issues through adapting at different circumstances, and therefore they succeed in their interactions. They act naturally with their peers, are accepted easily in a social group. Consequently, the emotionally intelligent individual is capable of innovation and creativity (Roco, 2001).

3. Psychological particularities of developing emotional intelligence during preadolescence

The prosocial orientation opposed to the antisocial is determined by elementary factors of psychic development (genetic transmission, social groups, education). The pre-teenager personality is strongly marked by

an increase of self-awareness and the capacity of self-determination. Affective vulnerability is another characteristic of the pre-teenager's personality, the ambiance where he grows and develops, the circumstances outside of it are of major importance.

The most important aspects of developing personality during preadolescence are: self-awareness, temperamental particularities, character, skills, moral consciousness, the physical self (the way the person perceives its own physical appearance, especially the ones referring to their own body, body image and sexual orientation), the social self (what the pre-teenager sees as valuable and important in life), the emotional self (the way the pre-teenager sees his own emotions and feelings) (Lemeni G., Miclea, M., 2004).

Just as social intelligence, a developed emotional intelligence correlates in a positive manner with certain psychological characteristics, such as:

- The ability to decode non-verbal messages,
- Differentiating the self-concept,
- The saturation of self-image with understanding intellectual characteristics,
- The saturation of self-image with describing volitive characteristics of personality,
- Precision,
- Fulness,
- Sensitivity at emotional states of others in communication situations,
- Diversity of the expressive repertoire in communication,
- Openness and manifestation of friendliness in communication,
- Emotional stability,
- Sensitivity to answering in communication,
- The ability of receiving critique,
- Conscientiousness,
- Pronounced self-appreciation,
- Self-acceptance,
- The active spirit,
- Profound reflection,
- The capacity of understanding in which way the emotional state of a person is perceived by its partners of communication,
- Empathy,
- Non-verbal sensitivity,
- Depth of reflection,
- The feeling of dignity,
- Interest shown towards social issues,
- Social activity etc (Mikhailova, E., S., 1996)

The study of emotional intelligence development imposes investigations and additive research studies, so that both present and future generations to be able to adapt to new life situations and new attributions, developing their personality and personal life, becoming valuable and successful people.

Therefore, the necessity of multilateral thorough analysis of the emotional intelligence phenomenon, of its structure and defining factors is essential both for accentuating, signalling the basis of this process, as well as understanding relevant situations of developing emotional intelligence during preadolescence, of developing particularities of the emotional and personality field. It can be affirmed that the problem of emotional intelligence has an interdisciplinary character, being at the interference of the controversial types of approach in contemporary science and practice. In conclusion, it can be affirmed that developing emotional intelligence is a condition of performance and presents the ability to adapt in any new given situation.

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