

## Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence describes how an individual deals with intrapersonal or interpersonal aspects of emotions. The concept appeared in the nineties (Goleman, 1995), and was the centre of much debate for a long time. The debate focussed on two main opposing perspectives: whether emotional intelligence should be considered as an ability or a trait. The ability perspective regarded emotional intelligence as something that people could learn which would be best assessed through performance-based tests. The trait perspective considered emotional intelligence as a stable disposition linked to personality traits, assessed through self-report measures.

In sport, researchers first favoured the ability approach under the assumption that emotional intelligence could be trained and improved. However, growing evidence within the framework of the trait perspective revealed many connections between emotional intelligence and predictors of sport performance. The predictors included; physiological stress responses, successful psychological skill use, better athletic performances, and more positive attitudes towards physical exercise (Laborde, Dosseville, & Allen, 2016). Given the plausible arguments and evidence underlying both perspectives, the ability and trait perspective will be later reconciled within the tripartite model of emotional intelligence (Mikolajczak, 2010). This model had an additional third dimension, resulting in three levels of emotional intelligence: knowledge, ability, and trait. The knowledge level describes one's knowledge about emotional concepts. The ability level corresponds to what the person can do if asked to. The trait level shows what one habitually does to deal with emotions, without the need to be reminded. Ability EI appears more visibly in short term situations and trait EI has the greater long-term impact.

With the notion that EI can be trained and improved, the term "emotional competences" has surfaced as a more fitting description of the concept. Today there is a consensus to describe the five main competences related to emotional intelligence as the identification, expression, understanding, regulation and use of owns' or others' emotions.

## References

- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence*. New York, NY England: Bantam Books, Inc.
- Laborde, S., Dosseville, F., & Allen, M. S. (2016). Emotional intelligence in sport and exercise: A systematic review. *Scandinavian journal of medicine & science in sports*, 26, 862-874. doi:10.1111/sms.12510
- Mikolajczak, M. (2010). Going Beyond The Ability-Trait Debate: The Three-Level Model of Emotional Intelligence. *e-journal of applied psychology*, 5(2). doi:10.7790/ejap.v5i2.175