



## **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED INSTITUTIONALIZED: PRELIMINARY STUDIES**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Recent studies have come to show the need to complement traditional approaches of intelligence with other cognitive functions, such as the social and emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Goleman, 2006, Jones & Day, 1997).

As these new dimensions to explore, which we will present the study aimed to describe the social and emotional intelligence and its relation to emotional and social skills in children with special educational institutions.

The sample incorporated 20 children with special educational needs and 369 regular education children, aged between 7 and 13 years old, and were the following instruments: The Social Intelligence Test for Children, the Emotional Perception Test for children, the Test of Social Skills for children and the Raven's Progressive Matrices.

The results allow us to identify and evaluate the cognitive processes of social and emotional development of children in general and children's special educational needs in particular and are a new way of looking at human skills and social skills and emotional.

Key: Social Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence, Special Educational Needs.



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### **INTRODUCTION**

At present, socio-emotional skills are increasingly studied and valued by educational institutions and the labor market. Its importance to the prevention of certain behaviors has already been repeatedly demonstrated, as well as for conflict resolution.

The institutions of learning have come to recognize what the job market had already anticipated, the importance of socio-emotional skills for career development and employability. Thus, adaptability and capacity for conflict management and teamwork, resilience, the ability to decide and the ability to lead and work towards factors that cause stress, among others, are features valued by business (Pérez-González & Talavera 2007).

The concept of social-emotional competence is closely linked to social and emotional intelligence (Mayer, DiPaolo & Salovey, 1990, 1997, Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000, Goleman 1995).

Regarding the study of socio-emotional skills, their importance seems to be growing, since the job market, understood as a feedback mechanism of the training system has also been appreciating the socio-emotional skills as factors promoters employability. The skills are not stable characteristics of individuals, but rather a demonstration of appropriate skills in certain situations. (Talavera & Pérez-González, 2007).

According to Bar-On's Model of Emotional Intelligence and the social dimensions of intelligence, emotional intelligence includes abilities or skills related to understanding of oneself and of others as well as the relationship with people, adapting the demands of the environment and the management of emotions. (Bar-On, R., 1997, 2000).

For Bar-On (1997), emotional intelligence would be a set of skills, competencies and skills that influence the ability to deal successfully with the demands and pressures of the environment.

Whereas a decreased competence in this area of development may influence the current school performance and professional futures. It becomes then important to assess such skills in that knowledge of them could constitute itself as a contribution to the intervention and prevention of situations of mismatch present and future.

Initially social competence was defined as the achievement of social issues in particular social contexts (Ford, 1982).

In our days we can understand by social competence an ability to manage behavior, cognition and affection in order to achieve their social objectives, without (1) constraining the opportunities of their peers and (2) embarking on a path of development that may preclude opportunities for social objectives not yet anticipated (Machado et al, 2008). Or such as Corbi et al (2007) argue, social competence is not a homogeneous attribute, but a constellation of thoughts, feelings skills and behaviors that vary from one situation to another.

In our study we will examine how emotional intelligence (adaptability, interpersonal, intrapersonal: positive impression, Intrapersonal: expression of emotion, stress management), abstract intelligence are related to social competence, depending individual have or not special educational needs. We expect that, emotional intelligence, abstract intelligence have different effects depending either type of individuals. Helping us, so to better understand the needs and care of these individuals have, for example, the evaluation of individuals with special needs.

### **METHOD**

#### **Participants**

The study included 369 children (189 girls and 180 boys) from regular class, and 20 children (**10 girls and 10 boys**) with special educational needs. The students' ages range from 7 to 13 years, from elementary school.



## DESAFÍOS Y PERSPECTIVAS ACTUALES DE LA PSICOLOGÍA EN EL MUNDO ADULTO Y ENVEJECIMIENTO

### Procedures

With the children in the regular class the administration of the tests took place during a single fifty-minute session during lesson hours and in the presence of the researcher. To children with special educational needs tests were applied individually.

The testes were provided on a total voluntary basis, after the authorization of parents. Collected data were analyzed through SPSS.

### Measures

#### Bar On Emotional Quotient Inventory: Youth Version (EQ-i:YV; Bar-On & Parker, 2004).

In Portuguese studies (Candeias et al., 2008) the questionnaire has great validity of construct, pointing out for five dimensions: *Adaptability, Intrapersonal-Positive Impression, Interpersonal scale, Intrapersonal-Expression of Emotion and Stress Management*. With an internal consistency of .87 for Total EQ-i:YV (Total EQ), and .86 for Adaptability scale (EQ-AS), .83 for Intrapersonal-Positive Impression scale (EQ-PI), .81 for Interpersonal scale (EQ-IS), .70 for Intrapersonal-Expression of Emotion scale (EQ-EE) and .69 for Stress Management (EQ-SM), improving the full version questionnaire properties.

#### Social Competence Test for Children (PACS-6/11, Candeias et al., 2008)

The participants are expected to analyse five interpersonal problem-situations (in a verbal format), in which the participants are requested to *self-evaluate social competence performance and facility* on a 1-to-3 Likert scale, in which 1 is "Poor" and 3 is "Excellent". Candeias et al. (2008) found an internal consistency of .82 for PACS-6/1.

#### Coloured Progressive Matrices (CPM, Raven, 1965)

Abstract intelligence was measured by CPM. The participants are expected to solve 36 items (3 series), choosing the correct solution among 6 options. We've used the Portuguese adaptation (Simões, 2000), with an internal consistency of .89.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A correlation analysis was carried out to determine if Emotional Intelligence dimensions (Adaptability, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal: positive impression, Intrapersonal: Expression of Emotions, Stress Management) and Abstract Intelligence are related to Social Competence (see table 1 e 2).

The analysis of table 1, indicate a significant negative relationship between cognitive functioning (CPM) social Competence (PACS) in children with special educational need institutionalized but not in regular children.

Moreover, we can observe a different relationship between different aspects of Emotional Intelligence and Social competence, *as if* in regular children (positive correlation) the experience with social tasks constituted an important way to develop social and emotional competences, but not in children with special educational need institutionalized (only one significant correlation - QE-EE)



**SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED INSTITUTIONALIZED: PRELIMINARY STUDIES**

**Table 1.** Correlations of the studied variables in the group of **regular children**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. CPM	1						
2. EQ-AS	-0,02	1					
3. EQ-PI	0,06	,661(**)	1				
4. EQ-IS	-0,01	,652(**)	,736(**)	1			
5. EQ-EE	-0,08	,683(**)	,468(**)	,389(**)	1		
6. EQ-SM	,197(**)	-0,09	,144(*)	,128(*)	-0,07	1	
7. PACS	-0,06	,418(**)	,209(**)	,235(**)	,260(**)	0	1

Leg.: Notes: \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, (2-tailed).

**Table 2.** Correlations of the studied variables in the group of children with special educational need institutionalized.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. CMP	1						
2. QE-AS	-,048	1					
3. QE-PI	-,079	,803**	1				
4. QE-EE	-,293	,774**	,659**	1			
5. QE-IS	,215	,807**	,873**	,625**	1		
6. QE-SM	-,474*	,434*	,275	,488*	,320	1	
7. PACS	-,452*	,420	,230	,443*	,207	,225	1

In order to understand the influence of abstract intelligence and emotional intelligence in social competence (PACS: 6/11) we made an analysis of regression (Stepwise procedure), and determine how such variable could be understood as predictors of social competence.

Our study shows that **Social competence is differently influenced** in Children with special needs and regular children (see Tables 3 and 4). In the group of regular children **the most important predictor of social competence is adaptability** or the flexibility to be realistic and to be efficient in managing change in everyday problems. For the **group of children with special needs the abstract intelligence is a predictor in a negative sense.**

Results presented in table 3, show that of  $R^2 = 0,577$  ( $p < 0,01$ ), stand for 58% of variability that occur in social competences is explained by adaptability (one of the components of emotional intelligence), in 33%. That means flexibility to adapt to new situations is important to go for a good social adaptation.

In table 4 we can observe that the value of  $R^2 = 0,464$  ( $p < 0,01$ ), represent 68% of variability that occurs in social competence is explained by abstract intelligence (CPM) in 20,5%. This influence is negative, which means that a low level of abstract intelligence determines the highest levels of perceived good social.



DESAFÍOS Y PERSPECTIVAS ACTUALES DE LA PSICOLOGÍA EN EL MUNDO ADULTO Y ENVEJECIMIENTO

**Table 3.** Analysis of regression (Social Competence: PACS: 6/11; Regular children)

Variable	Beta Coefficient	t	p	r part.
EQ-AS	,577	3,994	,000	,577 (33,3%)

**Table 4.** Analysis of regression (Social Competence: PACS: 6/11; children with special educational need institutionalized)

Variable	Beta Coefficient	t	p	r part.
CPM	-0,681	-3,608	0,003	,465 (20,5%)

## CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study provide foundations for developing differential norms (special needs/regular) for standardized assessment measures of social and emotional competences, which enables more reliable and ecologically valid tools.

This kind of assessment approach could be very useful for intervention, because it could provide the characterization of children with special needs in social and emotional potentials and request, which makes the planning and implementation of more accurate counselling intervention possible, as well as monitoring and evaluating its effects, with reference to a process of growing autonomy and awareness in the management of one's life projects.

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**SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED INSTITUTIONALIZED: PRELIMINARY STUDIES**

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