

Emotional and positive intelligence as precursors of the individual's quality of life

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence, conceptualised as the individual's ability to control one's own emotions and maintain positive relations with other people in the course of the interpersonal interaction, is by now universally recognised as a dynamic personality trait that can be purposefully developed and is likely to predict the quality of life. The new phenomenon, identified recently – positive intelligence – is also hypothesized to be predictive of the quality of life. We have conducted an exploratory study with the Ukrainian language speaking, on 60 subjects (graduate specialists with higher education) using this phenomenon alongside with emotional intelligence quotient. Two groups of subjects, which differed on the quality of life, appeared to differ on the Emotional and Positive intelligence, while there were no differences between them, as was expected, on the cognitive intelligence. The results open up new vistas for investigating the role of different forms of intelligence for enhancing the individuals' quality of life.

Keywords: Intelligence, cognitive, emotional, positive, quality of life.

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1. Introduction

The so-called 'general intelligence', assessed in terms of the intelligence quotient (IQ), has been widely dealt within the context of the key metatraits of successful university-level students (Nosenko, Arshava, Kornienko, Kutovyy & Arshava, 2018), indicative of how the individual *thinks* in the course of pursuing major life goals. The level of cognitive intelligence has been referred to as a significant predictor of the quality of life.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that the role of other two forms of intelligence manifestation – emotional and positive – might be even more important for the achievement of the quality of life than that of cognitive intelligence. The thing is the latter forms of intelligence manifestation, unlike the cognitive intelligence, are claimed to be more liable to change and purposeful development (enhancement) than the cognitive intelligence, known to be more dispositionally determined.

The role of intelligence manifestation in the individual's quality of life has attracted the attention of psychologists comparatively recently – since the end of the twentieth century, when L. Terstone introduced the concept of the 'general intelligence', assessed in terms of the IQ. Later on there, appeared two new terminological collocations with the keyword 'intelligence': emotional intelligence (in the 90s of the twentieth century, finally conceptualised by two American Psychologists Mayer and Salovey, 1993). Their ideas were actively popularised by Daniel Goleman, particularly in his monograph 'Working With Emotional Intelligence' (Goleman, 1998).

The terminological collocation 'positive intelligence' first appeared in 2012–2016 and quickly became popular – at least in Russia and Ukraine – thanks to the publication of the monograph titled 'Positive Intelligence' by American psychologist Chamine (2012), which was translated into the Russian language in 2017. After this, the author was also invited to present his conceptualization of the positive intelligence at the International Conference held at Dnipro National University in Ukraine and did it in his written presentation titled: 'How to handle "difficult" people' (Chamine, 2017). By the 'difficult' people he meant those individuals, who had not got rid of the so-called 'saboteurs', i.e., unproductive 'mindsets' functioning as conditioned reflexes, which had survived since childhood.

In fact, the interest of the authors of this paper to the phenomenon of the positive intelligence is determined, at large, by the long-existing tradition in Ukraine and Russia to investigate the psychological problem of 'sets', which guide the individuals' behaviour in different life encounters, rooted in the investigations of the widely recognised Georgian psychologist Uznadze (1949), who is still considered to be the key author of the 'theory of sets'.

So, in this paper, we have selected the collocation 'mindset' to refer to the predisposition of the individual to behave either wisely following the 'wisdom perspective', i.e., striving to explore, navigate, regulate and activate one's efforts to successfully achieve life aims, or on the contrary, sticking to the 'saboteurs' – unproductive 'driving forces' of the human behaviour. Although terminologically somewhat obscure, the idea to single out different forms of intelligence manifestation, including 'positive intelligence', seems worthwhile, since it allows – as far as we could gather – to conceptualise Campbell's call to describe how the individual *thinks, feels* and *acts* in the course of pursuing life goals as important precursors of life success.

To sum up the ideas, discussed in the introduction, we think that it is reasonable to compare three forms of intelligence manifestation: cognitive (indicative of how one *thinks*); emotional (indicative of how one *feels* in the course of planning one's behaviour and dealing with other people) and positive (demonstrating how one *acts* in the course of implementing the chosen line of behaviour into actual functioning).

Thus, we have chosen to refer to the negative mindsets – saboteurs as unfavourable predispositions to behave in the course of pursuing life tasks and the mindsets, indicative of the so-called 'wisdom perspective' – as the favourable ones. The author of the theory of the positive

intelligence, who analysed and generalised different levels of the positive intelligence, convincingly proved on the basis of the interviews with 275 respondents, that the level of development of this form of intelligence can *radically* influence the quality of life, since the people who possessed higher levels of positive intelligence enjoyed better health, were more socially active, achieved higher level of professional success and were more satisfied with themselves (Chamine, 2012). The most unfavourable mindset appeared to be that of a '*judge*', under the impact of which the individual rigorously sought drawbacks in oneself and in other people which, as is clear, reduced one's positive – self-consciousness and trust to other people, intensified negative feelings.

The same is true of other predispositions to act unproductively: to be constantly on the alert ('controller'), to avoid active efforts to solve difficulties that may arise in life. The latter mindset is likely to result in the so-called 'self-handicapping' behaviour, which lately attracted the attention of psychologists, both foreign and native, and was analysed in some of our publications as well (Nosenko, Arshava & Nosenko, 2014; Nosenko & Nosenko, 2017a; 2017b; Nosenko & Arshava, 2019).

Summing up the results of the research findings, which have been reviewed earlier, we can make the following conclusion.

Only the so-called 'cognitive intelligence', which has had a lengthy theory of investigations, has been given a multi-aspect description, for example, in the monograph by Smulson (2001). The author claims that gifted people, e.g., successful scientist, are prone to experience high quality of life, thanks to the high levels of satisfaction with the results of their efforts.

Other two phenomena: emotional intelligence and positive intelligence which attracted the attention of the scholars in the field of psychology and practitioners only since the 90s of the twentieth century, have not yet been studied sufficiently in the context chosen for this paper, except the recent publication of Chetveryk-Burchak and Nosenko (2016), in which the role of the emotional intelligence was investigated as a factor that stimulates the satisfaction of the individual with oneself as the subject of pursuing life tasks. This research illustrated by many examples of the so-called 'not merely cognitive' activities of the individual, which are aimed at knowledge acquisition.

P. Bar-On, a well-known Canadian researcher, suggested in this connection the possibility to conceptualise emotional intelligence as a sum of all the '*non-cognitive*' abilities and competences, which allow the individual to successfully cope with various life tasks. He singled out five spheres of competence manifestations, which other researchers (Lyusin, 2004; Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts, 2009) have summed up as likely precursors of the quality of life: self-knowledge: comprehension of one's own emotions, beliefs in self-efficacy, self-respect, self-control, independence; the competences displayed in the inter-personal communication: empathy, social responsibility; the ability of adaptation: successful strategies of coping with various life problems; impulsivity control; optimism.

So, *this paper aims* at demonstrating the predominant role of the levels of the emotional and positive intelligence manifestations in predicting the individuals' perspectives either to succeed in life or experience irritation, tension and stress.

Since the review of investigations, as to showing the role of different forms of intelligence in determining the quality of life, was based on the descriptions of behaviour of the educated individuals our own empirical research, we have also chosen the sample of 60 participants.

2. Methods and results

We have hypothesized that different forms of intelligence manifestation make an impact on the quality of life, namely: 1) cognitive, 2) emotional and 3) positive. Thus, potential impact is on the following hierarchical order (from lowest to highest): 1) cognitive, 2) emotional and 3) positive (the highest expected level of the impact).

Empirical hypotheses: 1) the higher the level of the emotional intelligence, the higher is the individual's experience of the quality of life; 2) the higher the level of development of the so-called 'wisdom perspective' of the individual's positive intelligence, the higher is level of experiencing the quality of life and 3) differences in the cognitive abilities of the individuals do not tell significantly on the quality of life, since this type of intelligence has at least an above-average level in other individuals who finished the secondary school and moreover had higher education.

In accordance with the above-formulated hypotheses, the following major assignments of the empirical research were formulated. For conducting the research, we involved a sample of participants who were aged 21–50 years, both males and females, possessed higher education and employed accordingly.

The above-described category of research participants seemed most appropriate for conducting the research aimed at defining the impact of different forms of intellect on the quality of life. The following psychodiagnostic techniques have been used for the research purpose.

A short selective test for assessing the cognitive intelligence adapted by V. Buzin, with the help of which the IQ was assessed, assesses the following aspects of the intellect development: the ability to generalise and analyse material; flexibility of thinking, ability to switch over attention; emotional components of thinking, frequency of the attention deviation; quickness and exactness of the information perception; spreading and concentration of attention; the ability to formulate one's thoughts orally; and literacy, the choice of the optimal strategy of the orientation in space.

With the help of the above-described technique, it is possible to assess the following indices of the cognitive intelligence development:

- an overall level of the cognitive abilities development;
- verbal abilities: oral speech command; comprehension of the verbal analogies; the ability to perform logical operations with separate words; text comprehension the ability; the ability to catch the direct and the indirect meaning of words; as well as the general level of awareness;
- abilities to count quickly and exactly; arithmetic habits; understanding of the mathematical operations.

The other psychodiagnostic techniques (which are well known, as far as we can gather, to the foreign readers) included: the EQ test by H. Hall; the PQ–Score by S. Chamine; the Life Satisfaction Test by Neugarten, adapted by N. Panina; the 'Purpose-in-Life Test' by J. Crumbaugh and L. Maholic (adapted by D. Leontiev); and the Test of Hardiness by S. Muddy (adapted by D. Leontiev and O. Raskazova).

On the sample of 60 graduate specialists with higher education, we formed two groups of subjects who differed on the levels of the quality of life (assessed in terms of its basic components, namely: awareness of the aims of life, level of involvement and satisfaction with life).

Our empirical results, presented in Tables 1–3, have confirmed our hypotheses. As shown in Table 1, two groups, which differed in the quality of life, appeared unequal in number: 19 persons (group 1 with higher level of the quality of life); 41 persons (group 2 with statistically lower level of the quality of life).

Table 1. Results of expected differences in cognitive intelligence in groups with different levels of the quality of life

List of scales	Mean values		U Mann–Whitney value	p value
	Group 1 with higher level of the quality of life (N = 19)	Group 2 with lower level of the quality of life (N = 41)		
Integral indicator (cognitive) general abilities	32	28.8	318	0.25
Verbal abilities	16.74	16.1	342	0.43
Numerical abilities	8.95	6.6	316	0.3
Logical abilities	2.34	2.16	329	0.44
Spatial abilities	2.95	2.27	279	0.06
Concentration indicator and distribution of attention	1.44	1.21	300.5	0.09

As shown in Table 1, we did not observe any differences in the levels of the cognitive intelligence in the subgroups split in accordance with the differences in the quality of life.

Different results have been found in the same groups of subjects, when they were tested on emotional intelligence.

Table 2. Expected differences in emotional intelligence in groups with different levels of the quality of life

List of scales	Mean values		U Mann–Whitney value	p value
	Group 1 with higher level of the quality of life	Group 2 with lower level of the quality of life		
Emotional awareness	29.26	28.49	356	0.59
The ability to manage your emotions	23.32	22.98	368	0.73
Self-motivation	25.66	22.63	222	0.01
Empathy	27.05	26.63	345	0.47
The ability to manage the emotions of others	26.80	23.74	148	0.01

The results showed that there were statistical significant differences in the two polar groups in the sample that had differences in the levels of emotional intelligence, in particular significant differences were observed on two key EQ scales: 'self-motivation' and 'the ability to manage emotions of others' (differences are significant at $p \leq 0.01$).

The same groups of subjects were compared on the results of their positive intelligence. As shown in Table 3, there are significant differences in the overall measure of the positive intelligence.

Table 3. Differences in the levels of the positive intelligence in groups with different levels of the quality of life

Scale	Mean values		U Mann–Whitney value	p value
	Group 1 with higher level of the quality of life	Group 2 with lower level of the quality of life		
PQ Score	68.16	48.17	203	0.01

Having established the differences in the above mentioned levels of development of the two forms of intelligence (emotional and positive) with quality of life, we have analysed in which particular aspects of the quality of life intergroup differences are most vividly reflected.

According to the methodology used to diagnose quality of life, this phenomenon has three indicators: 1) awareness of life goals; 2) involvement into the process of achieving goals and 3) satisfaction with life.

Our research findings indicate that two groups of subjects which did not differ on cognitive intelligence had statistically significant differences on emotional intelligence (EQ), namely, on the scale 'the ability to manage the emotions of others' and on the overall index of the positive intelligence.

Table 4 summarises the differences between the groups in terms of awareness of life goals.

Table 4. Differences in the scores of the quality of life as caused by awareness of the aims in life

List of scales	Mean values		U Mann–Whitney value	p value
	Group 1 with higher level of the quality of life	Group 2 with lower level of the quality of life		
General score:	98.78	92.92	284	0.92
meaningfulness of life				
Awareness of the aim in life	27.89	27.70	382	0.9
The involvement into the process of life	30.36	26.04	233	0.01
Productivity of life	25.26	23.34	283	0.08
Locus of control	19.42	17.95	303	0.16
Locus of life control	31.78	29.41	298	0.14

Significant differences were recorded only on the scale involvement into the process of life. Much more differences were found in the aspects illustrating the satisfaction with life (see Table 5).

Table 5. Differences in the indicators of the quality of life, characterising satisfaction with life

List of scales	Mean values		U Mann–Whitney value	p value
	Group 1 with higher level of the quality of life	Group 2 with lower level of the quality of life		
The general index of life satisfaction	30.73	27.97	228	0.01
Interest in life	6.52	5.97	302	0.15
Consistency in achieving goals	5.92	4.94	230	0.01
Consistency between the set and the achieved goals	6.31	5.12	240.5	0.01
Positive evaluation of oneself and one's own actions	6.94	6.19	262	0.03
Overall mood background	6	4.82	247	0.02

As shown in Table 5, all the indicators of the quality of life differ in the groups, formed for empirical testing of the hypotheses of this research, except one scale – interest in life.

Nevertheless, the general index of life satisfaction is statistically different in the groups formed for this research.

3. Conclusion

The results of this research – the first one on the chosen problem in Ukraine – showed that out of the three basic forms of intelligence manifestation, cognitive, emotional and positive, the most informative predictor of the quality of life is the level of the positive intelligence, then goes emotional intelligence and the least predictive is the cognitive intelligence. Whether the above-presented hierarchy is universal across different cultures is the prospect of further research.

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