

SPECIFIC OF THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH IN CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract: *the article analyzes the need for emotional intelligence research that takes into account various cultural aspects, as a necessary area for further understanding of the construct. The author emphasizes that before the use of foreign types of emotional intelligence measurement their invariant psychometric properties should be firstly investigated. Based on the analysis of the specificity of cross-cultural studies of emotional intelligence, the author concludes that in order to achieve maximum accuracy and significance of comparison using foreign types of measurement, researchers should increase the reliability and establish different levels of equivalence.*

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Cross-Cultural Psychology, Cultural bias, Psychological Questionnaires.*

СПЕЦИФИКА ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ ЭМОЦИОНАЛЬНОГО ИНТЕЛЛЕКТА В КРОСС-КУЛЬТУРНОЙ ПСИХОЛОГИИ

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Аннотация: *в статье анализируется необходимость исследований эмоционального интеллекта, учитывающих различные культурные аспекты особенно в незападных странах, как необходимая область для дальнейшего понимания конструктора эмоционального интеллекта. Автор подчеркивает, что при использовании зарубежных видов измерения следует исследовать их инвариантные психометрические свойства. На основании анализа специфики межкультурного исследования эмоционального интеллекта, автор приходит к выводу, что в целях достижения максимальной точности и значимости сравнения при использовании зарубежных видов измерения исследователи должны повысить достоверность и установить различные уровни эквивалентности.*

Ключевые слова: *эмоциональный интеллект, кросс-культурная психология, культурные предубеждения, психологические опросники.*

One of the areas of research in the field of emotional intelligence, which remains a relatively unexplored area, is its cross-cultural aspect. Cross-cultural research is aimed to develop and expand a more universal psychology by studying the generalization of psychological theory in different cultures. The inability to establish generalizability (when the research methodology and measurement tools are reliable) can be interpreted in terms of cultural differences in behavior.

This has two implications for future cross-cultural studies of emotional intelligence. First, when monocentric instruments (tools from a single Western cultural background) are used (for example, from Western to non-Western cultures), then it is highly likely that the results might have issues with a lack of objectivity. Therefore, the equivalence testing of results for different cultures should be carried out regularly.

Secondly, when cultural bias (construct, object, or method) are found in evaluating emotional intelligence, there should be considered ways to minimize them. Beside that, the proof of the construct and subject bias should be carefully examined in order to better determine the cultural variability of the construct.

This knowledge can be used to reduce ethnocentrism in existing instruments of measuring emotional intelligence, as well as to develop more "culturally-minded" development programs of the construct [6, p. 77].

In cross-cultural psychology, studies of emotional intelligence in this field have mostly yielded results of psychological differences and generalizability, and empirical data on ethnic differences have been noted as '...scarce and contradictory' (10, p. 1021)

This remains true for the study of emotional intelligence as outstanding abilities (Multi-Factor Emotional Intelligence Scale; Test of Emotional Intelligence Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, MSCEIT; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000), and a mixed model of measuring emotional intelligence (self-report) (Bar-On, 1997; The Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test, SSRI / EIS).

The criteria for the correctness of emotional intelligence ("correct" answers) (MEIS, Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000) are usually based on targeted, expert, or agreed criteria [8, p. 234]. They claim that the basis for asserting "correct" answers represent the evolutionary and cultural foundation of the consistency of emotionally signaled information.

The evidence of a strong universal emotional 'language' and the expression of emotions on people's faces was provided in Charles Darwin's papers on the evolution of emotions (1872/1965). Emotional ideas are spread and reproduced as popular, depending on how useful and functional they are in a certain culture [4, p. 57].

The consensus criterion is the best way of determining the correct answer, stating that "... if you accept the idea that emotional signals evolve biologically and culturally, then a wide, representative sample of observers might be a good judge of correctness, at least in some circumstances" [8, p. 327].

Based on this, it can be argued that when a consensus assessment is used in measuring emotional intelligence, the possible influence of cultural biases in this type of measurement can be controlled.

In the research of emotions in different cultures, different terminology is often used for two different approaches: ethnic-emic, culturally specific — culturally common and cultural-cross-cultural. The latest theoretical models, which take into account the universality and cultural differences in certain aspects of emotions, agree that all these strategies/approaches are important for improvement of cross-cultural studies of emotions. Reflecting these achievements in the study of emotions, the study of emotional intelligence in different cultures should be aimed at using the potential of both of these approaches, while avoiding the well-known methodological traps.

When conducting cross-cultural studies of emotional intelligence, ethnocentrism in modern theories of emotional intelligence (and related measurement tools) can be reduced if the limitations of existing theories are recognized in order to seek the expansion of data and theory by including other cultures [2, p.65]. Although scientific efforts to address the question of whether and how to develop emotional intelligence are in its infancy, the benefits of intercultural knowledge to improve our understanding of emotional intelligence should not be underestimated. If it is argued that greater adequacy between personal and cultural norms / beliefs reinforces social interactions and adaptation (typical results of people with high emotional intelligence), then a detailed understanding of how culture governs norms of emotional and intellectual behavior (in a particular culture) is an important basis for development of psychological theory. This underscores the need for emotional intelligence studies conducted within the framework of cross-cultural psychology, that is, where individual behavior (or psychology) and culture are viewed and studied as mutually constitutive phenomena. Therefore, it is necessary to note the need for research that takes into account various cultural aspects that are crucial for the creation of more universal psychological theories. It is necessary to note that cross-cultural studies are necessary for further understanding of emotional intelligence especially in non-Western countries.

For more than three decades, disciplinary preferences of researchers have dominated the study of emotions, which leads to an oversimplification in the debate on cultural universality or relativism of emotional experience. In other words, psychologists and biologists are more inclined to ignore cultural differences, while anthropologists emphasize on them, without paying to much attention on similarities.

Recent theoretical models attempt to explain both universality and cultural variation, focusing on similarities and differences of individual components of emotions across cultural boundaries. Matsumoto D. suggested that, although emotions are biologically programmed, control over expression and perception depends heavily on cultural factors [7, p.13].

There is an assumption that emotions are shaped and supported socially and culturally. This might happen due to collective knowledge, which is represented in the linguistic agreement—for example: the character of the affective lexicon and the specific meanings of the terms of emotions [11, p. 26]. Consequently, it can be claimed that traits or competencies, measured on the basis of a self-report of emotional intelligence (for example, emotional control), involve this collective knowledge of the culture in which the questionnaire itself was developed.

In applying the techniques of emotional intelligence based on self-report, the presence (or absence) of certain peculiarities, competencies, or behavioral tendencies that could allow a person to respond emotionally and rationally respond to the environment and cope with environmental pressures, whether in the workplace (productivity, teamwork, leadership, ability to cope with stress, burnout) or in life in general (life satisfaction, psychological and is measured within the boundaries of the cultural origin of the test.

If the manifestation of the adequate emotional-intellectual behavior depends on the context, it can be assumed that the socio-cultural context should be taken into account when the behavioral manifestations of emotional intelligence (often used for measuring this construct) are included in the development of a tool for self-report. For example, key cultural aspects such as individualism-collectivism, high or low distance of power, avoidance of uncertainty can be important factors influencing this process [5, p. 68].

Considering that 'appropriate' or 'effective' emotional behavior is itself dictated by the cultural background of the measuring tool used, the question arises whether the notion of the 'ideal' profile of emotional intelligence depends on the cultural context. The another question is to what extent does such an instrument and construct, which the questionnaire itself is designed to measure, truly reflect the construct and all its aspects in other cultures?

When using foreign types of measurement, invariant psychometric properties and higher levels of equivalence of instruments should be investigated. Cross-cultural equivalence can be understood in terms of the continuum of universality-cultural differences and different levels of abstraction and concreteness [9, p.301). The universal continuum of cultural differences (the extent to which constructs are considered universally applicable or meaningful in a particular cultural context), also known as the ethical-emic approach [2, p. 71], has present in emotion research for more than three decades. It is necessary to note that the practice of "blind export" of foreign psychological questionnaires to other cultures, without caring about their compliance, can seriously complicate the correct interpretation of the results and theoretical achievements.

In our opinion, in intercultural psychology it would be more methodologically correct to transfer the measuring procedure with known psychometric properties established in one culture to one or several cultures. The equivalence of export

measuring instruments should be regularly checked before the average differences in the measured peculiarities can be reliably compared between different cultural groups.

For example, the development of the construct of emotional intelligence in Africa and Asia, independent and far from Western influence, can contribute valuable knowledge to the modern conceptualization of the construct, which can reveal other aspects of emotional intellectual behavior that are culturally specific and have strong predictive value in that culture (or even in other cultures).

In our opinion, such a development should be completely without influence of the West in order to cover the real cultural concept of the construct. For example, although the emotional intelligence scale (WLEIS) was developed in Hong Kong, it may still not cover the full conceptualization of emotional intelligence in this culture. This is because the scale was designed to ask students to generate elements for the four dimensions of emotional intelligence of Mayer and Salovey (1997), which no doubt introduced the Western ethnocentric definition of the construct into the process of large-scale development of the construct.

Based on the analysis of the specificity of cross-cultural studies of emotional intelligence, it can be concluded that the use of foreign types of measurement, researchers should increase the reliability and establish different levels of equivalence, in order to achieve maximum accuracy and significance of comparison in cross-cultural studies.

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