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## Emotional Intelligence, Anxiety and Aggression as Predictors of Destructive Behaviour and Offences of Teenagers

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### Abstract

The results of research on emotional intelligence and personal characteristics of teenagers under suspended sentence are considered in the article. The purpose of research: studying of emotional intelligence level and comparison of aggression and anxiety between teenagers under suspended sentence and law-abiding teenagers. Methods of research: Bass – Darki test (BDI) - for evaluation of aggression and animosity; questionnaire of Spielberger-Khanin (STAI) for evaluation of situational and personal anxiety; EIS test (Hall) - for studying emotional intelligence level.

It is shown, that the comparative analysis has revealed authentic distinctions of all parameters using EIS technique, parameters of situational and personal anxiety using STAI technique, indirect aggression and feeling of fault using BDI questionnaire among teenagers under suspended sentence and law-abiding teenagers. The correlation analysis revealed that the more aggressive a teenager under suspended sentence is, the lower his/her emotional intelligence, self-motivation and emotional awareness are, and as a result, the worse he/she distinguishes emotions of other people. The revealed significant interrelations between personal characteristics, emotional intelligence and aggression have shown that it is possible to control animosity and aggression of teenagers under suspended sentence if their self-motivation and emotional awareness are raised.

The psychological status of teenagers under suspended sentence shows directions for psych corrective work with them which should include, besides individual consultations, group work to decrease aggression, situational and personal anxiety and, what is the most important, to form emotional competence.

*Keywords:* emotional intelligence, aggression, animosity, anxiety, teenagers under suspended sentence, asocial behaviour, offending behaviour, destructive displays, correlation analysis.

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## **Introduction**

In a modern society the problem of aggressive behaviour of teenagers, undoubtedly, is actual. High prevalence of emotional disorder and disturbing frustration of children and teenagers induces researchers to search for the reasons of the given disorders, to study their influence on behaviour and adaptation, and also to develop perspective variants of cognitive behavioural correction of the given frustration (Creswell, Waite, & Cooper, 2014).

## **Purpose and objectives of the study**

In modern literature there is little research about emotional intelligence of teenagers who make offending actions. The purpose of our research is to study the level of emotional intelligence and specify aggression and anxiety of law-abiding teenagers and ones who have suspended sentence. Therefore, this aim will allow carrying out the correctional help to a teenager and family, and also to predict and prevent occurrence of deviant and asocial behavior.

## **Literature review**

Disturbing frustration, emotional disorders often accompany syndrome of attention deficit with hyperactivity. So, anxiety comorbidity influence on behaviour and daily functioning of children with ADH was proved by Sciberras et al. (2014). In research on emotional intelligence and self-estimation of 370 teenagers with ADH (Craparo et al., 2015), the decrease in self-estimation and mood, low level of adaptability of teenagers were revealed. There is also an inverse characteristic - significant comorbidity symptoms are registered among children and teenagers with disturbing frustration. So, according to Mohapatra, Agarwal, Sitholey, & Arya (2014), it was found among 54 % of the surveyed patients.

Emotional disorders and anxiety quite often appear among children and teenagers with epilepsy (according to Jones, 2014, in 5 - 49 % of cases), among children and teenagers with disorders of autistic spectrum (Delli, Polychronopoulou, Kolaitis, & Antoniou, 2018), and as a result, it forces to develop and introduce corresponding correctional programs (Gobrial, & Raghavan, 2018).

In modern research the interrelation of disturbing frustration with high mental potential of children and teenagers (Tordjman, Vaivre-Douret, Chokron, & Kermarrec, 2018), with social environment (Sahoo, Kohli, Sharma, & Padhy, 2015), with situations at school and fear in front of social estimation (Avakyan, & Volikova, 2014) is proved.

White, Jarrett, & Ollendick (2013) consider that it is important to investigate the mechanism of self-control among teenagers with reactive aggression and difficulties of self-regulation in them. Authors have revealed that problems of adaptation and behavioural disorder of teenagers with high level of aggression and it can be corrected by the development of self-control skills. According to the authors, it was found that orphans living in adoptive families decreased in efficiency of social functioning, instability of self-estimation and communicativeness level. Similar results were found by Shulga, Savchenk, & Filinkova (2016).

Many researchers consider that it is necessary to study emotional intelligence in the context of family relations. So, Batool, & Bond (2015) specify, that emotional intelligence of parents is indirectly connected to the aggression shown by teenagers through the educational strategy accepted in the given family. Authors make a conclusion, that development and the subsequent training of emotional intelligence will help parents to improve style of education, and it will also decrease the risk of children' aggression.

In works on emotional intelligence by Costa, Barberis, Gugliandolo, Larcan, & Cuzzocrea (2018)

the role of parents in its formation in children is also noticed. Authors believe, that the emotional intelligence has essential influence on formation of relations in the system «parent - teenager». Emotional intelligence influences teenager's perception of separation and autonomy of parents, and also influences control carried out by parents, and represents itself as mediator between generations.

Thus, interrelation of aggression, anxiety and emotional intelligence not only reflects actual psych emotional condition of teenager, but also allows determining strategy of his/her behaviour and an opportunity of the adaptation in society.

### Methodology

The following methods are used: Bass – Darki test (BDI) for evaluation of aggression and animosity; questionnaire of Spielberger-Khanin (STAI) for evaluation of situational and personal anxiety; EIS (Hall) test for studying emotional intelligence level including various aspects of emotional intelligence: attitude to yourself and to others, ability to communicate and distinguish emotion of others, and also attitude to life and harmony.

Statistical processing was carried out with use of the software package «STATISTICA v.10» and Excel. Spearman correlation analysis (Spearman, at  $p < 0.05$ ) was used to evaluate strength of interrelations between two lines of compared quantity indicators. U-criterion of Mann - Witney was used to evaluate distinctions between two independent samples.

The sample was 100 pupils from Kazan school, with the age range 14-17 years old:

- Experimental group (EG) - 50 teenagers who have made an offence and teenagers under suspended sentence were taking part in psychological rehabilitation in the Complex center of social service of children and youth "Trust", in the department of psychological and pedagogical help "Uventa";
- Control group (CG) - 50 law-abiding teenagers who do not have a police record.

### Findings

The comparative analysis by U-criterion of Mann - Witney revealed significant difference in all parameters of EIS technique (table 1), parameters of situational and personal anxiety of STAI technique, indirect aggression and feeling of fault of indirect aggression and feeling of fault of BDI questionnaire BDI indirect aggression and feeling of fault of BDI questionnaire among teenagers of experimental and control groups.

Table 1

The comparative analysis by U-criterion Mann – Witney

	ankS um 1	ankS um 2		Z	-level	Z	p- level	alid N	alid N	*1 sided
Verbal Aggression (BDI)	897	153	78	,564501	2 3	,606013	0,00 9161	0	0	,010015
Feeling of Fault (BDI)	948,5	101,5	26,5	,919533	2 6	,983402	0,00 2851	0	0	,003229
Personal				4		4	0,00			0

Anxiety (STAI)	163	887	12	,398257	,000011	,553361	0005	0	0	,000006
Situational Anxiety (STAI)	131	919	44	,1776554	,000029	,2784284	0019	0,00	0	,0000190
Emotional awareness (EIS)	983	067	08	,373645-	,000187	,379155-	015	0,00	0	,0001450
Management of emotions (EIS)	931	119	56	,409493-	,000042	,414591-	0034	0,00	0	,0000280
Self-motivation (EIS)	823	227	48	,483946-	,000001	,490381-	0001	0,00	0	,0000010
Empathy (EIS)	981	069	06	,375024-	,000177	,380631-	0141	0,00	0	,0001360
Recognition of Emotions of other people (EIS)	808	242	33	,494287-	,000001	,50042-	0001	0,00	0	,0000000
Emotional Intelligence (EIS)	853	197	78	,463265-	,000004	,465989-	0003	0,00	0	,0000020

The correlation analysis in EG (Spearman, at  $p < 0.05$ ) has shown, that almost all parameters of BDI questionnaire have negative interrelations with parameters of EIS technique. For instance, the parameter «physical aggression» has strong negative interrelation with the parameter «emotional awareness» ( $r = -0.7$ ), «self-motivation» ( $r = -0.5$ ), «recognition of emotions of other people» ( $r = -0.6$ ), «emotional intelligence» ( $r = -0.43$ ), but here with the parameter «physical aggression» is directly connected to the parameter «management of emotions». «Indirect aggression» has strong negative connection with parameter «self-motivation» ( $r = -0.8$ ), «emotional awareness» ( $r = -0.9$ ), «emotional intelligence» ( $r = -0.6$ ).

Thus, the more aggressive a teenager under suspended sentence is, the lower his/her emotional intelligence, self-motivation, emotional awareness are, the worse he/she distinguishes emotions of other people, but he/she manages his/her aggression. It is necessary to notice, that the parameter «personal anxiety» by STAI has negative interrelation with the parameter «self-motivation» by EIS ( $r = -0.3$ ), that is, the more anxious teenager is, the less he/she is capable to have self-motivation. The parameter «feeling of insult» is negatively correlated with the parameter «emotional awareness» ( $r = -0.3$ ), «self-motivation» ( $r = -0.4$ ) and «empathy» ( $r = -0.4$ ), that is, the better a teenager under suspended sentence realizes and understands his/her emotions, the more emotionally flexible and easily appeased he/she is and he/she can manage the behaviour, and he/she can also understand emotions of other people, he/she has lower feeling

of insult which is expressed in the intense painful attitude of a teenager under suspended sentence to himself/herself.

Correlation interrelations in CG (control group). By results of STAI, parameters of personal and situational anxiety have feedback ( $r = -0,52$ ), compared to teenagers under suspended sentence, who has strong direct interrelation ( $r = 0,84$ ). I.e. law-abiding teenagers, having even high parameters of personal anxiety, can manage their reactions.

By results of BDI test it is revealed: the higher «physical aggression» of a law-abiding teenager is, the higher the parameter «recognition of emotions of other people» ( $r = 0,32$ ) is. «Indirect aggression» has direct connection with parameters: «emotional intelligence» ( $r = 0,33$ ), «irritation» ( $r = 0,35$ ), «management of emotions» ( $r = 0,32$ ), «self-motivation» ( $r = 0,42$ ). Thus, we can see that a law-abiding teenager can manage his/her aggression.

Thus, the following results have been received in the performance of the research:

- The comparative analysis has revealed authentic distinctions of all parameters from EIS technique, parameters of situational and personal anxiety from STAI technique, indirect aggression and feeling of fault from BDI questionnaire among teenagers under suspended sentence and law-abiding teenagers. Insufficient maturity of emotional intelligence, and conjoined increased parameters of anxiety and physical aggression, became the reason of destructive behaviour of teenagers resulted in commission of offences.

- The correlation analysis has shown that low level of emotional intelligence in the combination with low self-motivation and low emotional awareness correlates with high level of aggression of a teenager having committed an offence and a teenager under suspended sentence, in contrast to teenagers of control group.

- The revealed significant interrelations between emotional intelligence, personal characteristics and aggression have shown that it is possible to manage animosity and aggression of teenagers under suspended sentence by means of increase of their self-motivation and emotional awareness to feelings of other people.

The received results can be used:

- For the profound and objective analysis of the problems connected to psychological factors of juvenile delinquency, with psychological features of teenagers who have committed an offence;

- For forming effective complex psych corrective programs aimed at formation and the increase of emotional intelligence level of teenagers with the purpose of prevention of their destructive emotional reaction and deviant behaviour and violation of law;

- For drawing up the methodical recommendations intended to teachers of schools and others educational organizations, to psychologists, experts of social sphere to increase their knowledge of the necessity of emotional intelligence formation among children and teenagers, and training of children to recognize their own emotions, especially of destructive orientation (anger, fury, aggression) and to manage them;

- During lectures, special courses and practical classes on the general, age and pedagogical psychology;

- In psychological education of workers of educational organizations, people engaged in rendering assistance to minor offenders, experts of the social field and parents.

Taking into account received results it seems necessary to do:

- 1) Deeper studying of emotional intelligence influence on destructive and offending behaviour of

teenagers;

2) Develop the psychological program on the development of an adequate level of emotional intelligence. Results of this application will contribute to the formation of knowledge and the skills of emotions' recognition and their management among teenagers and as a result, it will lead to the successful adaptation of teenagers in society;

3) Carrying out longitude research with the purpose to confirm the hypothesis about interrelation of emotional intelligence and other personal characteristics of teenagers under suspended sentence.

### **Discussions**

Research has allowed considering an actual problem of destructive behaviour and offences committed by teenagers from essentially new position based on understanding of the importance of emotional intelligence and its level of maturity. Development of emotional intelligence begins in childhood, specifically in the family environment. Undoubtedly, that teenagers' maturity of emotional reaction, the skill to distinguish emotions and to manage them is determined by features of family system and styles of parental upbringing. Development of skills of management of destructive behavior by a teenager is obviously important to us. Low parameters of emotional intelligence determined in the experimental group revealed an inconsistency of family system in formation of adequate emotional reaction. In this context the results of our research are comparable to the data by Batool, & Bond (2015) and Costa et al. (2018).

Social stigma, being reflected in a state of emotional sphere of a teenager, also can become a reason of destructive offending actions. The low level of emotional intelligence revealed in our research is comparable with communicative inconsistency and low level of social functioning of children - orphans from adoptive families in research by Shulga et al. (2016). In both cases immaturity of emotional intelligence in the family environment alongside with experience of social maladjustment and negative experiences takes place.

Significant correlation relationships of parameters of emotional intelligence, aggression and anxiety represented in the research confirm: the higher the parameter of emotional intelligence is, the lower the level of aggression and animosity of teenagers under suspended sentence is. Conclusions of our research are comparable to results by White et al. (2013) because the necessity of development of emotional intelligence and skills of self-control for correction of problems of adaptation, aggression and behavioural offences of teenagers is emphasized in their study as well.

### **Conclusion**

Research on emotional intelligence, the analysis of specificity of aggression and anxiety, studying the personality of teenagers under suspended sentence are necessary for development of psych corrective programs directed on prevention of illegal behavior, including means of work with emotional sphere of a teenager and with his/her emotional intelligence.

Results of the conducted research show the necessity of long psych corrective work formation with the minor teenagers under suspended sentence, directed on formation of emotional intelligence and emotional competence, on decrease in anxiety, aggression and search of adequate eliminating destructive behaviour and negative emotional state within framework of individual consultation, group process, and subsequent psychosocial support. Emotional intelligence becomes the basis for development of assertive, socially comprehensible behaviour, with subsequent decrease / disappearance of repeated offences and

reduction of risk recurrence among teenagers under suspended sentence. And the skills of emotional competence mastered by teenagers will allow them to be integrated into society successfully.

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