Investigation of Emotional Intelligence Level In Terms of Socio-Demographic Variables

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Abstract

Emotional Intelligence has attracted great attention in popular literature with many several studies conducted in the last twenty years. Mayer, J.D. and Salovey, P. (1993), who coined the term emotional intelligence, define it as a type of social intelligence composed of individual's capability of controlling feelings of others, making a choice among these feelings, and using these feelings to shape his/her life. Emotional Intelligence is considered the key to success in all fields of life, namely at school, home and in relationships. The aim of this study is to investigate whether emotional intelligence is related to the gender and field of study (social sciences, natural sciences and health) of university students. At the same time, the study aims at examining what dimensions of emotional intelligence is affected by the educational level of the parents prior to the university education of the student and whether it is effective in choosing the field of studies at university.

This research is a descriptive study. The Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Bar-On was used in order to measure Emotional Intelligence. Emotional Intelligence Scale is composed of five main dimensions (Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Stress Management, Adaptability and General Mood) and fifteen sub-dimensions. Considering the conditions of the students and the size of the sample, the study discusses three hypotheses:

H1: The Emotional Intelligence level of the students will differ according to gender.
H2: The Emotional Intelligence level of the students will differ significantly in terms of education they receive in social sciences, natural sciences and health.
H3: The Emotional Intelligence level of the students will differ according to the level of education of the parents.

Data gathering conducted by means of a questionnaire prepared from primary resources. The four-point scale prepared for the questionnaire is composed of the following items: I never do that; I sometimes do that; I often do that; and I always do that.

All of the 271 students who participated in the study answered all of the questions, and thus, there are no missing data. The analysis of the questionnaire was conducted by means of SPSS 16 package program. The steps of the analysis conducted were reliability, calculation of the means, independent t-test for controlling for gender, ANOVA (one-way analysis of variance) technique and the Scheffe Test, respectively.

The General Emotional Intelligence test scores show a significant difference when controlled for gender. The means demonstrate that the male students score better than the female students. Significant difference was observed between the male and the female students in two dimensions of Emotional Intelligence: Stress Management and Adaptability. The male students are more successful in terms of these two dimensions, whereas there is no significant difference in the other three dimensions (Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, and General Mood).

The results of the General Emotional Intelligence show a significant difference according to the students' field of studies. It was observed that the social science students score higher in Emotional Intelligence than the natural science and health students. Moreover, there is a significant difference in the 5 sub-dimensions of the Emotional Intelligence Test according to the field of studies. The ANOVA test conducted with the General Emotional Intelligence scores showed that there is difference in Intrapersonal, Adaptability, and Stress Management sub-dimensions. In order to determine the field of studies in which this difference exists, the Scheffe Test was conducted, and it was observed that the students of social sciences were more successful in three sub-dimensions, Intrapersonal, Adaptability and Stress Management, than both the students of natural sciences and health.

There is no significant difference in Emotional Intelligence level according to the level of education of the parents. However, the evaluation in terms of five dimensions demonstrated that there is a significant difference in Adaptability when controlled for the parents. The relationship between this difference and the level of education of the parents showed that illiterate mothers and fathers with elementary school education have higher means in Adaptability than the parents with other levels of education.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Bar-On Emotional Intelligence Scale, Socio-Demographic Variables

Introduction

Emotional intelligence is as old as human being. Since its existence, man sometimes has been the prisoner of his emotions, sometimes used them in order to cope with an issue and sometimes man perceived emotions as a significant key to survive by accommodating to the environment. Emotional Intelligence has attracted great attention in popular literature studies conducted by Mayer and Caruso in 2000, by Salovey in 2000 and by Mayer in 1999 and 2002. Mayer et al. defined the term Emotional Intelligence as the cognitive ability to understand the reasons of problems and to find solutions to them and to understand the meaning of relationships and emotions(Mayer,J.D & Salovey,P.,1995:p112). Additionally, researchers claimed that the idea of having same relationships for emotional creativity can be Emotional Intelligence(Bar-On, R., & Parker, J.D. 2000:1108).

Emotional intelligence has been defined by several researchers until today. For instance, Bar-On defines emotional intelligence as being concerned with effectively understanding oneself and others, relating well to people, and adapting to and coping with the immediate surroundings to be more successful in dealing with environmental demands (Çakar,U., & Arbak,Y,2004:37), on the other hand Peter Salovey and Jack Myer define it as a subset of

social intelligence which is the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions (Mayer, J. D., & Salovey,P.,1995:112).

It should be known that Emotional Intelligence is not an activity or discipline which includes the skills and performances of a human. Measuring Emotional Intelligence is not easy as by measuring it with Intelligence Test. Actually, Emotional Intelligence Tests which are prepared for measuring, determine desires of a person and the areas that one can be successful. In most of the researches it is observed that as a result of the differences in their moods same people give different answers to same tests in different time periods. This gives the following result that Emotional Intelligence is not related with personality. Personality consists of characteristics that determine how a person thinks and behaves. In Emotional Intelligence Tests some kind of detections can be done for the characteristics of an individual such as being shy, being thoughtful, being compliant, having humor and being nervous. The emotional intelligent people who get positive results from Emotional Intelligence Tests are supposed to perceive their own feelings as well as supposed to be warm, close, decisive and optimist by arranging their own emotional situations (Constantine, M.G.& Gainor, K. A.,2001:131).

In the researches which have been performed since ten years, it appears that emotional intelligence is a developable emotion style as distinct from the other intelligence styles. Emotional Intelligence is examined in demographic dimensions to determine this development and in this respect the most significant demographic characteristics is gender. In most of researches which are on gender differences no difference is observed between gender and emotional intelligence whereas in some researches significant differences are found between gender and emotional difference. In the study related with these differences which is performed by Furham et al., gender differences are evaluated and according to this study men have higher results than women in terms of emotional intelligence level (Petrides, K.V., & Furham, A.,2004:460). However, in some studies women are found better than men in their interpersonal relationships whereas men have higher results than women in dimensions of impulse control and stress tolerance.

In contrast to the study of Furham et al., emotional intelligence average of female subjects are higher than male subjects in another study which is conducted to the university students(Aşan, Ö. & Özyer, K.,2003:165). According to Eisenburg and Lennon, having social gender differences is normal since men appease their feelings whereas women more clearly define their feelings(1983:125). According to Leary and Smith the feelings such as compassion, sadness, empathy and anxiety are generally not perceived mannish feelings, since their childhood men have tendency to compress these feelings (Morris, R.B.,2002:432).

In the study of "Emotional intelligence: not much more than g and personality" which was performed in 2006 by Melanie J.Schult, Malcom James Ree and Thomas R.Carretta from Our Lady of the Lake University of USA the relationship between emotional intelligence, personality and cognitive ability was examined and it is determined that cognitive ability and personality have played central roles in the investigation of determinants of human performance (Melanie, J.S,.& Malcom, J.R,.& Thomas, R.C.2006: 1066).

The field of study variable is another concept to examine Emotional Intelligence. In the study of "Emotional Intelligence Level of Faculty Members" which is performed by Ercumend Ersanli from Ondokuz Mayis University, the level of emotional intelligence of

faculty members is examined in terms of education level variable and main field of study variable. According to this study, emotional intelligence level of faculty members who work in social science is higher than emotional intelligence level of faculty members who work in health and natural science.

In his other study, Bar-On found a significant relationship between the years of education and emotional intelligence. He found that the all sub-dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and the total score of Emotional Intelligence have a positive relationship with the years of education. Bar-On explained the Emotional Intelligence in five main dimensions. In order to measure Emotional Intelligence, he prepared a scale which was composed of five main dimensions and fifteen sub-dimensions. The sub-dimensions which are used by Bar-On to define Emotional Intelligence are:(Steven, J.S.,& Book, H.E.2003:176)

Intrapersonal Area: This relates to self-awareness and self-expression. Evidently, it determines how in touch we are with our emotions and feelings, our ability to feel good about ourselves, and to feel positive about what we are doing in our lives and what we can do in our lives. *Emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, self-regard, self-actualization* are *five significant factors* in this area.

-*Emotional Self-Awareness:* The ability to be aware of and understand our emotions, to know what we are feeling and why and to know what caused those feelings and as a result of these emotions to perceive the effects of possible behaviors on other people.

-*Assertiveness:* The ability to express feelings, beliefs and thoughts and to defend our rights in a nondestructive manner.

-*Independence:* The ability to be self-reliant, self-directed in our thinking and actions and to be free of emotional dependency.

-*Self-Regard:* The ability to accept our positive and negative aspects as well as our limitations and possibilities.

-*Self-Actualization:* The ability to set personal goals and the drive to achieve them in order to actualize our potential and being satisfied from one's success both in work and private life.

Interpersonal Area: This area of Emotional Intelligence comprises the skills. Those who function well in this area tend to be responsible. They interact well with various people. They inspire trust and function well as part of a team. This area consists of three sub-dimensions. These are *empathy, social responsibility* and *interpersonal relationship.*

-*Empathy:* The ability to be aware of and understand how others think and what they feel in view of the events and being able to emotionally read other people.

-*Social Responsibility:* The ability to demonstrate cooperative, contributing and constructive manners in a social group.

-*Interpersonal Relationship:* The ability to establish and maintain mutually satisfying relationships and the ability to provide benefits from giving and receiving motives which include emotional closeness.

Adaptability Area: This dimension relates with the level of being flexible and realist. It shows the problem solving ability. It determines how successful we are able to cope with daily demands by effectively sizing up and dealing with problematic situations. Success in this area means that we can grasp problems and devise effective solutions, deal with and resolve various issues as they arise at home, with friends and in the workplace. There are three sub-dimensions as *reality testing, flexibility* and *problem solving.*

-*Reality Testing:* The ability to objectively validate our feelings and thinking with external reality.

-*Flexibility:* The ability to adapt and adjust the feelings, thinking and behavior according to new situations.

-*Problem Solving:* The ability to define and effectively solve problems

Stress Management Area: This component of emotional-social intelligence relates primarily to emotional management and control and governs our ability to deal with emotions so that they work for us and not against us. People who are successful in this area are able to withstand and effectively cope with stress without losing control. They are typically calm, rarely impulsive and work well under pressure. There are two sub-dimensions in this area. These are *stress tolerance* and *impulse control.*

-*Stress Tolerance:* The ability to withstand and deal with adverse events and stressful situations without getting overwhelmed and capacity to be relaxed and composed and to calmly face with difficulties without getting carried away by strong emotions.

-*Impulse Control:* the ability to resist or delay an impulse, drive or temptation to act.

General Mood: This main-dimension is closely associated with self-motivation which determines our ability to enjoy ourselves, others and life in general. This area comprises the emotions of gratification and dissatisfaction. There are two criteria in this area. These are *optimism* and *happiness.*

-*Optimism:* The ability to maintain a positive and hopeful attitude toward life.

-*Happiness:* The ability to feel satisfied with life, to feel content with oneself, others and life in general and enjoy life activities.

The Aim and The Hypothesis of The Study

The aim of this study is to investigate whether emotional intelligence is related to the gender and field of study (social sciences, natural sciences and health) of university students. At the same time, the study aims at examining what dimensions of emotional intelligence is affected by the educational level of the parents prior to the university education of the student and whether it is effective in choosing the field of studies at university.

Considering the conditions of the students and the size of the sample, the study discusses three hypotheses:

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The Method of Study

This research is a descriptive study. The Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Bar-On was used in order to measure Emotional Intelligence. Emotional Intelligence Scale is composed of five main dimensions (Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Stress Management, Adaptability and General Mood) and fifteen sub-dimensions.

In this study, the emotional intelligence is examined according to five main dimensions and some socio-demographic variables (gender, field of study, the level of education of the

parents) which affect the emotional intelligence and are modelled as in a conceptual framework as in the following:

Figure 1. Conceptual model of socio-demographic variables that affect Emotional Intelligence
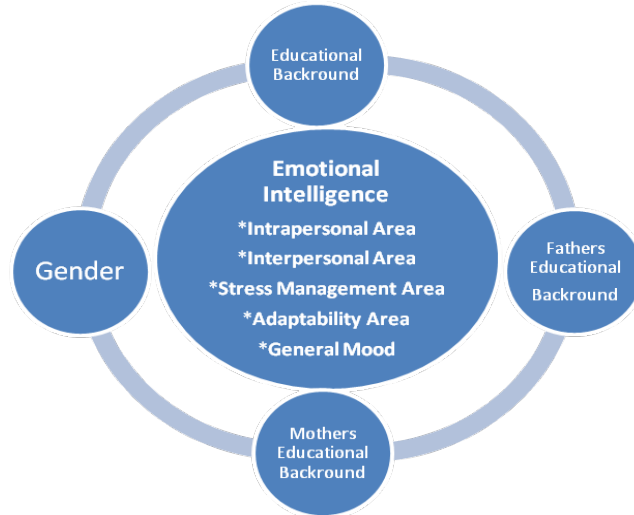
The data gathering tool to achieve the aim of the study is the questionnaire form prepaid using primary sources. The questionnaire which is prepared according to this model consists of six sections. First section investigates the demographic characteristics (age, gender, field of study, the region of the homeland, the level of education of the parents), second section investigates Interpersonal Area, third section investigates Intrapersonal Area, fourth section investigates Adaptation Area, the fifth and sixth sections investigate Stress Management Area and General Mood, respectively. The four-point scale prepared for the questionnaire is composed of the following items: I never do that; I sometimes do that; I often do that; and I always do that.

Sampling Method

The main target sample is determined from the university students attending to Management, Fine Arts, Sport Vocational High School, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Faculty of Science and Civil Aviation High School at Anadolu University in Eskişehir and 271 students are chosen from this sample by using the simple random sample method. There are no missing data.

Data Analysis Method

The data obtained from 271 students who participated in the study were analyzed with statistical methods. The analysis of the questionnaire was conducted by means of SPSS 16 package program. The steps of the analysis conducted were reliability, calculation of the means, independent t-test for controlling for gender, ANOVA (one-way analysis of variance) technique and the Scheffe Test, respectively.

Finding and Discussion

The reliability of direct questionnaire is evaluated and these values are shown in Table 1. If the value which is obtained as a result of the Cronbach Test is above 70%, the test shows

reliability. When these values are examined, it is decided that these variables are reliable and their statistical analysis can be performed.

Table 1. The Results of Reliability Analysis

	Variable Number	Cronbach Alpha (α)
Intrapersonal Area	25	0.698
Interpersonal Area	15	0.731
Adaptability Area	6	0.736
Stress Management Area	13	0.789
General Mood	13	0.717

The demographic characteristics of these sample students are examined and shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Sample Students

Demographic Characteristics		frequency	%	Demographic Characteristics		frequency	%
Gender	Women	149	%55	Educational Background	Social	94	%34,7
					Science	96	%35,4
	Man	122	%45		Health	81	%29,9
Mothers Educational Background	Illiterate	19	%7	Fathers Educational Background	Illiterate	2	%0,7
	Litarate	11	%4,1		Litarate	8	%3
	Primary	131	%48,3		Primary	107	%39,4
	High School	70	%25,8		High School	76	%28,0
	University Graduate＋	40	%14,8		University Graduate＋	78	%28,8

The independent T-Test results of the subscales of Emotional Intelligence and total scores of those subscales of sample students according to the gender are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The Independent T-Test Results of General Emotional Intelligence Scores of Students According to Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
General Emotional Intelligence	Women	122	2,2269	-2,05	269	0,041
	Men	149	2,2918	-2,05	256,1	0,042

The General Emotional Intelligence test scores show a significant difference in terms of gender. The averages are calculated as equal to $\bar{x}$ =2,2269 for 122 female students and $\bar{x}$ =2,2918 for 149 male students which demonstrate that the male students score better than the female students.

Whether five sub-dimensions of Emotional Intelligence show differences according to the gender or not is determined with an independent T-test.

Table 4. Independent T-Test Results of Students in terms of Five Main Dimensions According to Gender and Statistical Group

	Gender	N	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Intrapersonal Area	Women	122	2,8330			
	Men	149	2,8453	-0,29	269	0,776
Interpersonal Area	Women	122	3,1107			
	Men	149	3,0675	0,797	269	0,426
Adaptability Area	Women	122	2,6922			0,016

	Men	149	2,8272	-2,43	269	
Stress Management Area	Women	122	2,3958			
	Men	149	2,5517	-2,52	269	0,012
General Mood	Women	122	2,9358			
	Men	149	3,0126	-1,54	269	0,126

When the five main dimensions of Emotional Intelligence are examined, it is observed that there are significant differences between male students $\overline{x}$ =2,8272 and $\overline{x}$ =2,5517, and female students $\overline{x}$ =2,6922 and $\overline{x}$ =2,3958 in terms of the dimensions of Stress Management Area and Adaptation Area. Male students show more success than female students to manage the stress without autism, dispersion, loose of control or deep sadness and also with the abilities of staying calm, rarely being impulsive, dealing with the pressure easily, evaluating situations in various hard conditions and showing the accurate reactions. However, there is no significant difference in terms of other three dimensions (Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, General Mood).

Finding related to field of studies of students are presented in the Table 5

Table 5. The Averages According to Field of Studies of Students

Education Department of Students	Mean	N
Social	2,3359	94
Science	2,1955	96
Health	2,2570	81
Total	2,2626	271

ANOVA test is performed to determined whether there is a significant difference between the field of studies of the students and the general emotional intelligence results .

Table 6. The One-Way ANOVA Results of the General Emotional Intelligence Test of Students According to Their Field of Studies

Education Department of Students	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Emotional Intelligence	0,940	2	0,470	7,244	0,001

The results of the General Emotional Intelligence show a significant difference according to the field of studies of the students. The averages are calculated as equal to $\overline{x}$ =2,3359 of 94 social science students, $\overline{x}$ =2,1955 of 96 natural science students and $\overline{x}$ =2,1955 of 81 health students and therefore it was observed that the social science students have higher scores in Emotional Intelligence than the natural science and health students. In this respect, it can be stated that Emotional Intelligence of social science students are higher than the natural science and health students.

The results of the researches regarding to the sub-dimensions of Emotional Intelligence are represented in Table 7.

Table 7. The One-Way ANOVA Results of the Five Main Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence According to the Field of Studies of Students

According to Education Department of Students		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intrapersonal Area	Between Groups	0,916	2	0,458	3,743	0,025
Interpersonal Area	Between Groups	0,186	2	0,093	0,472	0,625
Adaptability Area	Between Groups	3,214	2	1,607	7,997	0,000
Stress Management Area	Between Groups	4,948	2	2,474	10,090	0,000

General Mood	Between Groups	0,615	2	0,307	1,835	0,162

As seen in Table 7, there is also a significant difference between the scores of Five Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence Test and field of studies of students. One-way ANOVA test was applied to the scores of General Emotional Intelligence in order to determine this difference and the results show difference in terms of the areas of Intrapersonal, Adaptation and Stress Management. Table 8 is formed according to results of Scheffe Test which is performed to find which field of study leads to this difference.

Table 8. The Averages of Sub-dimensions of Emotional Intelligence According to the Field of Studies

Education Department		Internal World State	Extrinsic World State	Adaptation State	Cope With Stress	General Psychic State
Social	Mean	2,9194	3,1129	2,9108	2,6261	3,0296
Science	Mean	2,7939	3,0937	2,6577	2,3086	2,9174
Health	Mean	2,8017	3,0487	2,7277	2,5188	2,9900
Total	Mean	2,8398	3,0869	2,7664	2,4815	2,9780

As seen in Table 8, it is observed that since the Intrapersonal Area, Adaptation Area and Stress Management Area of social science students are equal to $\bar{x}=2,9194$, $\bar{x}=2,9108$ and $\bar{x}=2,6261$, respectively they show more success in these three areas than health and natural science students.

ANOVA test is performed to determined whether there is a significant difference between Education Level of Mothers of Students and Five Main Dimensions.

Table 9. The One-way ANOVA Results of Five Main Dimensions According to the Education Level of Mothers of Students

Mothers Educational Background		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intrapersonal Area	Between Groups	0,124	5	0,025	0,195	0,964
Interpersonal Area	Between Groups	0,368	5	0,074	0,370	0,869
Adaptability Area	Between Groups	2,420	5	0,484	2,511	0,030
Stress Management Area	Between Groups	1,764	5	0,353	1,366	0,237
General Mood	Between Groups	0,865	5	0,173	1,027	0,402

There is no significant difference in General Emotional Intelligence averages according to the level of education of mothers. As seen in the Table 9, in these five main dimensions one-way ANOVA results show that there is a significant difference between five sub-dimensions scores and the education level of mothers. It is determined that this difference is in Adaptation Area, therefore Scheffe Test is performed in order to determine the level of education.

Table 10. The Averages of Sub-Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence According to the Education Level of Mothers of Students

Mothers Educational Background		Intrapersonal Area	Interpersonal Area	Adaptability Area	Stress Management Area	General Mood
Illiterate	Mean	2,8457	3,1842	2,9839	2,5439	3,0915
Litarate	Mean	2,9267	3,0960	2,9171	2,6951	2,8680
Primary	Mean	2,8296	3,0463	2,8256	2,4720	2,9243
High School	Mean	2,8235	3,1000	2,6541	2,3896	2,9774
University Graduate＋	Mean	2,8419	3,0681	2,8278	2,4839	2,9750
Total	Mean	2,8534	3,0989	2,8417	2,5169	2,9778

When the results of Table 10, the Scheffe Test are checked from it is showed that illiterate mothers have higher mean of $\bar{x}$ =2,9839 in Adaptability Area than the mothers with other levels of education.

ANOVA test is performed to determined whether there is a significant difference between education level of fathers of students and five main dimensions.

Table 11. The One-way ANOVA Results of Five Main Dimensions According to the Education Level of Fathers of Students

Fathers Educational Background		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intrapersonal Area	Between Groups	0,276	5	0,055	0,438	0,822
Interpersonal Area	Between Groups	1,518	5	0,304	1,559	0,172
Adaptability Area	Between Groups	2,733	5	0,547	2,854	0,016
Stress Management Area	Between Groups	0,831	5	0,166	0,635	0,673
General Mood	Between Groups	0,802	5	0,160	0,951	0,449

In terms of the General Emotional Intelligence, such a significant difference is not observed in the levels of fathers as in the education level of mothers. However, as seen in Table 9, according to the sub- dimensions one-way ANOVA results it is determined that the difference is in the Adaptation Area, therefore the Scheffe Test is performed again in order to determine the education level.

Table 12. The Averages of Sub-Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence According to the Education Level of Fathers of Students

Fathers Educational Background		Intrapersonal Area	Interpersonal Area	Adaptability Area	Stress Management Area	General Mood
Illiterate	Mean	2,6552	3,8611	2,6667	2,6771	3,4107
Litarate	Mean	2,8185	2,9306	2,7674	2,6901	2,8810
Primary	Mean	2,8480	3,1038	2,8674	2,5102	3,0140
High School	Mean	2,8729	3,0636	2,7600	2,5036	2,9624
University Graduate＋	Mean	2,8077	3,0783	2,7159	2,4197	2,9379
Total	Mean	2,8004	3,2074	2,7554	2,5601	3,0412

As seen in Table 12, according to the results of Scheffe test fathers with Primary school education have the highest average value with $\bar{x}$ =2,8826 and therefore the difference of

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fathers with elementary school education in the Adaptation Area is seen from this result compared to the fathers with other levels of education.

Conclusion and Evaluation

When the relationship between Gender and Total Emotional Intelligence is examined, it is seen that male students show more success to manage the stress without autism, dispersion, loose of control or deep sadness and also with the abilities of staying calm, being rarely impulsive, dealing with the pressure easily, evaluating situations in various hard conditions and showing the accurate reactions than female students. When these results are compared with the results of similar studies it is seen that highly consistent results are obtained. According to the relationship between the field of studies of the students and the results of General Emotional Intelligence, it is observed that social science students show more success than health students with the abilities to differentiate emotions, to recognize them, to know what they are feeling and why, to express emotions such as familiarity and anger, the ability to express beliefs and opinions even in emotionally bad situations, to control and be self-directed in their thinking and actions, to feel well, to respect themselves and to feel content with themselves, to determine the capacity of their potential, to determine problems and find effective solutions, to dedicate and define the degree of correspondence between what we experience and what actually exists, to adapt and adjust their feelings, to be active and positive, to cope with the stress, to manage the negative and boring situations without having anxiety, to resist and control impulses. According to the relationship between the education level of parents and Emotional Intelligence, it is observed that illiterate mothers and fathers with elementary school education raise their children better than the parents with other levels of education in terms of abilities to determine the problems and find effective solutions, to dedicate and define the degree of correspondence between what we experience and what actually exists and to adapt and adjust their feelings and thoughts according to the changing situations.

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