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**EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FEATURES OF STUDENTS WITH  
DIFFERENT LEVELS OF EMOTIONAL BURNOUT**

Tetiana Koltunovych (a)\*, Oksana Polishchuk (b)  
\*Corresponding author

(a) Pedagogical, Psychology and Social Work Faculty, Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, 2,  
Kotsiubynskogo Str., Chernivtsi, Ukraine, 58002, t.koltunovych@chnu.edu.ua

(b) Pedagogical, Psychology and Social Work Faculty, Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, 2,  
Kotsiubynskogo Str., Chernivtsi, Ukraine, 58002, o.polishchuk@chnu.edu.ua

***Abstract***

Our main objective was to determine the possibility of using emotional intelligence as a potential resource in overcoming emotional burnout among students. The article confirms the assumption about the existence of correlation and casual interconnection between emotional burnout and emotional intelligence. It has been empirically proved that emotional burnout ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) and depersonalization ( $p \leq 0.01$ ) have a stronger effect on emotional intelligence; and it's the level of emotional intelligence that determines emotional exhaustion ( $p \leq 0.01$ ) and reduction of personality achievements ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). Persons' ability to understand their own emotions ( $p \leq 0.01$ ), intrapersonal emotional intelligence ( $p \leq 0.01$ ), emotional control ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) effect emotional burnout, which in its turn is influencing expression control ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). In particular, students with a high level of burnout are characterized by worse level of understanding their own emotions ( $p = 0.003$ ), while it's a more situational relation in cases with students with average burnout. The relation between the ability to manage one's own and others' emotions in this group is weaker ( $p = 0.006$ ) than in a sample of students with a low level of emotional burnout; as well as their relation between intrapersonal emotional intelligence ( $p = 0.006$ ) and control of expression ( $p = 0.044$ ), compared to students with average and low levels of burnout. The obtained data contribute to the study of the burnout phenomenon and provide an opportunity to determine further directions of its prevention and correction in students by means of emotional intelligence development.

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**Keywords:** Emotional intelligence, understanding emotions, managing emotions, control of expression, emotional burnout.



## 1. Introduction

The formation of a professional outlook and relevant competences of future educators in the process of studying in higher education institutions is often accompanied by a high level of emotional stress, the dominance of negative emotions, a high number of stressful situations, a feeling of helplessness, a low level of emotional stability, fatigue, loss of motivation, ideals, etc., which ultimately can lead to their emotional burnout during the period of study. The intensity of the latter largely depends on how the student realizes his/her pedagogical potential, one of the components of which is the emotional intelligence that is an important factor of professional and personal success.

Therefore, it is quite natural for the question of connection between these phenomena, their mutual influence and interdependence to figure out.

## 2. Problem Statement

### 2.1. Emotional Intelligence

The theoretical basis for the study of emotional intelligence is the work of modern researchers Goleman (1995), Mayer & Salovey (1997), Weissbach & Dax (1998), Bar-On (1997), Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts (2003), Luissine (2004), Andreeva (2008) and others.

Nowadays there are several models of emotional intelligence in which it is interpreted as:

- emotion and cognition integration (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 1997, 2002);
- a combination of mental and personality traits inherent in each person (Goleman, 1995; Bar-On, 1997);
- a set of abilities that are based on social competence (the ability to "intellectually" manage their emotions) (Weissbach & Dax, 1998).

An analysis of numerous definitions of the notion allowed us to formulate the following definitive characteristic: emotional intelligence is a way of understanding, recognizing and choosing how we think, feel and act. It is emotional intelligence that allows us to understand our own emotions and emotions of other people, to manage the emotional sphere, to interact effectively with others, to make decisions based on their reflection and comprehension, to set priorities and to manage daily actions, which ultimately affects the success of our lives (Andreeva, 2012).

Modern studies show that people with a high level of emotional intelligence are better separated from negative emotions, the assessment and reassessment of which allows them to regulate tense and overcome stress (McFarland, Rode, & Shervani, 2016). That is, a high emotional intelligence is associated with a relatively lower level of stress (Gohm, Corser, & Dalsky, 2005). According to Oginska-Bulik (2005), the ability to cope with emotions helps to resolve stress and maintain psychological health. This conclusion was reached by Bar-On, Brown, Kirkcaldy & Thome (2000). They prove that emotional intelligence includes a number of non-cognitive abilities, skills and abilities that affect the ability of a person to cope with the requirements of the environment and external pressure. Nosenko & Kovryga in the study of emotional intelligence as an integral personal characteristic, note that it has internal (dispositive) and external (manifested in the signs of the emotional process) components that predispose the stress-protective and adaptive functions (Nosenko & Kovryga, 2003, p. 71).

Consequently, the emotional intelligence provides the basis for a human emotional self-regulation. And so it can be assumed that the integration and updating of emotional competence and emotional intelligence in general at the stage of mastering the profession by the future educators can create a powerful protective mechanism from emotional burnout.

## **2.2. Burnout and Emotional Intelligence**

Burnout as a psychological phenomenon has been studied for over 40 years. Due to the lack of universally accepted concepts of pathogenesis, discourse definition and terminology, this term has many descriptors and is interpreted from the viewpoint of different approaches. This uncertainty of terminology, according to Schaufeli, Maslach & Marek, is caused by the mixing of two levels of explanation: general discourse and scientific research (Schaufeli, Maslach, & Marek, 1993, pp. 177-193).

The problem of burnout in a student's age is considered at the work of Neumann & Reichel (1990); Schaufeli, Martinez, Pinto, Salanova, & Bakker (2002); Jacobs & Dodd (2003); Alarcon, Edwards, & Menke (2011); Olwage, & Mostert (2014), Salmela-Aro, & Read (2017); Robins, Roberts, & Sarris (2018) and others.

Based on the generalization of the main signs of burnout symptoms, the Institute for General Control of Stress (USA) interprets burnout as a slow exhaustion of energy, mechanisms of protection, the internal resources of the subject, due to prolonged stress and excessive demands and those that he himself set, and which are imposed on him (Schiffman, 2005, p.2). Some researchers see "positive" in the signs of burnout, which can be called the subject basis of counteraction to it. They believe that it is necessary to treat these symptoms as a kind of mental protection, and as an incentive to mobilize the subject to counteract the destructive effects, first of all, the moderate control and dosage of their own energy resources (Garden, 1991; Bojko, 1996; Trunov, 1998).

Bojko (1996) interprets burnout as a stress-related professional deformation, which in most cases contains an acquired stereotype of professional behavior that helps the subject to dosage and economically use their energy resources, and the protective mental mechanism for the complete or partial "shutdown" of emotions in response to psycho-traumatic influences, related to professional activities (Bojko, 1996, p. 133). A.-M. Garden - as a process of restoring balance and / or growth (progressive development) of personality (Garden, 1991). Kitaev-Smyk (2009) also treats burnout as a defensive mechanism, demonstrating the understanding of this "defense" by a metaphor: "If you have a bad neighbor, then burn down your house and leave." "House" is the soul of a person, which the subject burns, being protected from burning: he becomes indifferent, cynical, does not care about anything, does not sympathize, etc. Kitaev-Smyk called this state "flattened emotions", and the person who is in this state is "living dead". However, with the help of such "flattening" (defense), he/she saves the body from stressful psychosomatic illnesses like heart attacks, strokes, ulcers, colitis etc.

Orel (2005) points out that burnout is a maladaptive phenomenon that includes emotional, motivational and evaluation levels.

In our study, we postulate the explanation of emotional burnout as a gradual loss by the subject of vitality under the influence of prolonged stress within the activity (educational-professional), which turns out in symptoms of chronic fatigue, general exhaustion, depersonalization, reduction of personality achievements (Koltunovych, 2016).

Based on the foregoing, we can make a completely logical assumption that the level of the formation of emotional intelligence should affect the development of emotional burnout. Since the intrapersonal aspect of emotional intelligence is a kind of indicator of the tendencies for emotional burnout (Manoylova, 2008), the relationships between these structures indicate a defensive (protective) function of emotional intelligence in relation to burnout (Vasilyeva, 2016). That is emotional intelligence can be considered as a component of the mechanism of self-regulation of negative mental states, in particular burnout (Andreeva, 2012, p. 46).

### **3. Research Questions**

The problem presented in this scientific work is intended to solve several interrelated issues related to the features of emotional burnout and emotional intelligence in a student's age. First of all, find answers to the following questions:

- 1) What are the features of emotional intelligence and emotional burnout in future educators?
- 2) Are these constructs related?
- 3) How do these phenomena effect on each other?
- 4) Does the level of emotional intelligence and its components develop in students with different levels of emotional burnout?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

#### **4.1. The Aim of the Study**

The purpose of the scientific work was to determine the characteristics of the relationship of burnout with the emotional intelligence of students (future educators of pre-school education institutions).

#### **4.2. Research assignments:**

The goal was specified in the following tasks:

- 1) identify the correlation between burnout, emotional intelligence and their components;
- 2) to find out the causal relations between these phenomena;
- 3) to determine statistically significant differences between the emotional intelligence and its components in students with different levels of emotional burnout.

### **5. Research Methods**

#### **5.1. Participants**

The study involved 87 preschool education students of 3-5 years of study (aged from 19 to 22 years). The sample is homogeneous.

#### **5.2. Measures**

##### **5.2.1. Emotional Intelligence Study.**

The "Emotional Intelligence" test (EmIn) (Liussiene, 2006) consists of 46 tasks grouped in 5 subscales (understanding of someone's else emotions, understanding of one own emotions, managing of someone else emotions, managing of one own emotions; expression control), which are united in four scales

of a more general order (understanding emotions, managing emotions, interpersonal emotional intelligence, intrapersonal emotional intelligence). Also, with the help of the method, we can diagnose the integral index of emotional intelligence.

“EQ Test” (J. N. Hall) lets us determine how people use emotions in their lives. It takes into account the different aspects of emotional intelligence. The methodology consists of 30 items and contains five scales: emotional awareness; control of one’s emotions (emotional compliance, emotional non-rigidity); self-motivation (control of one’s emotions); empathy; recognition of other people’s emotions (the ability to influence the emotional state of other people) (Fetiskin, Kozlov & Manuilov, 2002, pp. 57-59).

### **5.2.2. Emotional burnout study**

MBI-ES (MBI: Educators Survey) (Maslach, Jackson, Leiter & Schaufeli, 1996) in adaptation of Vodopianova (2009) is designed to identify three components of the burnout syndrome: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduction of personality achievements.

The methodology “Diagnostics of the level of emotional burnout” (Bojko, 1996) is a diagnostic tool for burning out as a dynamic process that occurs in a phased manner in accordance with the mechanism of stress development, and includes three phases: stress, resistibility and exhaustion, which combine 12 symptoms (Fetiskin, Kozlov & Manuilov, 2002, pp. 395-399).

### **5.2.3. Mathematics Methods**

Methods of descriptive statistics, Spearman correlation analysis, Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance and the coefficient of determination were used. Mathematical data processing and graphical presentation of the results were carried out using the computer software package of statistical software SPSS 22.0.

## **6. Findings**

### **6.1. Features of emotional burnout and emotional intelligence of the future educators of pre-school education institutions**

The results from the methods of studying of emotional intelligence indicate that most students may have difficulties understanding and managing both their own emotions and the emotions of others. Thus, its high level was diagnosed only in 13.79% of future educators, and the average level was diagnosed in 62.07%. Similar results are observed on other basic scales. It is worth noting that most students are not able to manage their behavior by managing emotions (41.38% of the subjects have been diagnosed the average level of self-motivation, 51.72% has low level of self-motivation). Nevertheless, they have developed ability to understand the emotions of other people, to empathize the other person, as well as the willingness to provide with support, the ability to understand the condition of a person by facial expressions, gestures, shades of speech, and posture (67.82% of students were diagnosed high (25.89%) and the average (42.53%) levels of empathy). Obviously, such a result can be explained by the specifics of the profession of educator, for which empathy is one of the most important qualities.

By the method of C. Maslach & etc. 70.11% of the students were diagnosed with high and 29.89% with the average level of emotional exhaustion. The high and average levels on the scale of

depersonalization were diagnosed in 67.81% and 32.19% of students respectively. For 40.23% of the subjects is typical high, and for 48.28% is typical the average level of reduction of personality achievements.

In the structure of the burnout of the subjects (according to Bojko method) the phase of “resistance” dominates (formed in 39.08% of students, 44.83% is in the formation stage), which is characterized by excessive emotional exhaustion, resistance to increasing stress, conscious or unconscious desire of the subject to psychological comfort, reducing the pressure of external influences through the means available. In this state, a subject begins to study and perform professional duties worse, reduces the intensity of interaction with others, expands the scope of saving emotions, aspires to seclusion, and so on.

The next positions occupy the following phases: the phase of “exhaustion” (formed in 13.79% of the subjects, 34.48% is in the stage of formation), which is characterized by a decrease in the total energy tone (vitality), the weakening of the nervous system, psychophysical fatigue, the leveling of own achievements, communication disturbance, development of cynical attitude to others, psychosomatic disorders; the phase "stress" (formed in 12.64% of the subjects, 28.74% is in the stage of formation), which is characterized by a feeling of emotional exhaustion, chronic fatigue.

Thus, 63.22% of students have anxiety-depressive symptoms associated with educational-professional activities, with the absence of satisfaction from it; awareness of psycho-traumatic factors of professional activity; reduction of contacts outside of the educational-professional environment on the background of general tension and exhaustion; devastation, total or partial loss of interest in others; deviations in the somatic and mental states; sense of hopelessness (intellectual and emotional disturbance); violation of relations, cynical attitude towards group members and pupils, to the chosen profession in general; emotional insensibility against overexploitation; minimizing the emotional contribution to activity; automatic fulfillment of duties etc.

## 6.2. Research of the relationship between emotional burnout and emotional intelligence

The results of the correlation analysis indicate the presence of a large number of negative statistically significant relationships between the emotional intelligence and its components and emotional burnout and its elements (tab. 01).

**Table 01.** Significant correlation between emotional intelligence and its’ components and emotional burnout and its’ elements

Emotional Intelligence and its’ components	Emotional burnout and its’ elements			
	emotional exhaustion	depersonalization	reduction of personality achievements	emotional burnout
understanding of others’ emotions	-,296**	-,249*	-,489**	–
managing of others’ emotions	-,259*	-,235*	-,284**	–
understanding your own emotions	-,428**	-,560**	-,397**	-,227*
managing of one’s own emotions	-,284**	-,261*	-,284**	-,238*
expression control	–	-,243*	–	-,241*
emotional awareness	-,263*	-,221*	-,479**	–
selfmotivation	-,267*	-,257*	-,253*	-,221*
empathy	–	-,231*	-,409**	–
ability to coach others’ emotions	-,269*	–	-,301**	–
integral index of the emotional intelligence	-,387**	-,418**	-,459**	-,225*

Note: \*\* –  $p \leq 0.01$ ; \* –  $p \leq 0.05$ .

Consequently, the growth of emotional burnout and its components is accompanied by a decrease in the emotional intelligence in general and its components such as understanding and managing their own emotions, self-motivation in particular.

### 6.3. Features of emotional intelligence of students with different levels of emotional burnout

Comparison of the groups studied with different levels of emotional burnout (high, medium and low) with *Kruskal Wallis's* single-factor variance analysis (tab. 02) indicates the existence of statistically significant differences between them.

**Table 02.** Results of the comparison of the three groups of students with different levels of emotional burnout due to the emotional intelligence and its components

Test Statistics <sup>a,b</sup>				
	understanding your own emotions	expression control	intrapersonal emotional intelligence	emotional management
Chi-Square	11,604	6,269	10,258	14,421
df	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	,003	,044	,006	,001

a. *Kruskal Wallis Test* b. *Grouping Variable: groups with different level of emotional burnout*

In subjects with an average level of burnout, compared with the group of subjects with high levels, the indicators on the scale “understanding your own emotions” prevail. Indicators on the scale of “intrapersonal emotional intelligence” and “expression control” are significantly higher in students with medium and low levels of emotional burnout, compared to high, and on the scale of “emotional management” for students with lower than high. Thus, those with high levels of burnout can be characterized as not capable of realizing their own emotions: their recognition and identification, understanding the causes of their occurrence, the ability to their verbal description; to understand and manage the emotions of other people; to control external manifestations of their own emotions; to manage their own emotions and emotions of others.

### 6.4. Emotional burnout as a determinant of emotional intelligence. The presence of bilateral causal connections

In order to find out the direction and force of influence of the studied variables on each other, a procedure for determining the correlation ratio ( $\eta$ ) (tab. 03, tab.04) was performed.

**Table 03.** Correlation coefficient  $\eta$  and coefficient of determination between emotional burnout and its components and emotional intelligence

Influence of emotional intelligence on emotional burnout and its components			Influence of emotional burnout and its components on emotional intelligence		
Emotional burnout and its' elements	$\eta$	$\eta^2$	$\eta^2$	$\eta$	Emotional burnout and its' elements
emotional exhaustion	0,308**	0,095**	0,078**	0,279**	emotional exhaustion
depersonalization	0,385**	0,148**	0,153**	0,391**	depersonalization
professional accomplishment	0,495**	0,245**	0,160**	0,400**	professional accomplishment
emotional burnout	0,155	0,024	0,099*	0,315*	emotional burnout

Notes: \* –  $p \leq 0,05$ ; \*\* –  $p \leq 0,01$ ;  $\eta$  – correlation ratio,  $\eta^2$  – coefficient of determination.

For a qualitative estimation of the binding force on the basis of  $\eta^2$ , the *Chaddock* scale was used to verify the significance of the determination coefficient  $\eta^2$  – *Fischer's* dispersion F-criterion.

As a result of calculating the correlation coefficients ( $\eta$ ), statistically significant correlation relations between the two types are revealed, indicating the complexity and reciprocity of the relationship between emotional burnout and emotional intelligence.

**Table 04.** Correlation coefficient  $\eta$  and coefficient of determination between emotional burnout and components of emotional intelligence

Influence of components of emotional intelligence on emotional burnout			Influence of emotional burnout on components of emotional intelligence		
Components of emotional intelligence	$\eta$	$\eta^2$	$\eta^2$	$\eta$	Components of emotional intelligence
understanding your own emotions	0,354**	0,125**	0,112**	0,335**	understanding your own emotions
expression control	0,182	0,033	0,185**	0,430**	expression control
emotion management	0,322*	0,104*	0,093*	0,305*	emotion management
intrapersonal emotional intelligence	0,351**	0,123**	0,107**	0,327**	intrapersonal emotional intelligence
selfmotivation	0,224	0,050	0,107**	0,327**	selfmotivation
ability to coach others' emotions	0,316*	0,096*	0,044	0,210	ability to coach others' emotions

Notes: \* –  $p \leq 0,05$ ; \*\* –  $p \leq 0,01$ ;  $\eta$  – correlation ratio,  $\eta^2$  – coefficient of determination.

As can be seen from the tab. 03 & tab 04, burnout ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) and depersonalization ( $p \leq 0.01$ ) have a more powerful effect on the emotional intelligence, whereas the latter affects emotional exhaustion ( $p \leq 0.01$ ) and reduction of personality achievements ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). That is, depersonalization in 15.3% of cases and burnout in 7.7% of cases determine the level of emotional intelligence.

While emotional intelligence in 24.5% of cases determines the level of reduction of personal achievements and 9.5% of emotional exhaustion, 18.5% of cases of burning affects the ability to control external expression of their own emotions, in 10.7% of cases affects self-motivation. The influence of the components of the emotional intelligence on burnout is stronger. Thus, an essential factor in the process of forming an emotional burnout in 12.5% of cases is “understanding your own emotions”, 10.4% is “emotion management”, 12.3% is “intrapersonal emotional intelligence”, 9.6% is “ability to coach others’ emotions”.

The obtained data gives reasons for the conclusion of the existence of mutual causal links between emotional burnout and its components and emotional intelligence and its components.

## 7. Conclusion

The presented results of the study confirm the assumption that there are correlation and causal relationships between burnout and emotional intelligence of future educators in pre-school establishments.

The study empirically proved that it is difficult for students with a high degree of burnout to manage emotions, both their own and others, to understand their own emotions and control their expression.

The presence of students' emotional burnout and depersonalization affect their emotional intelligence, whereas the latter depends more on emotional exhaustion and reduction of personal achievements. Misunderstanding of their own emotions and their inability to manage them contribute to the



development of emotional burnout of students, the latter has a negative impact on the ability to control external expression of their own emotions.

Such results, in our opinion, contribute to the research of the phenomenon of burnout and its connection with emotional intelligence of future educators and provide an opportunity to identify further directions of studying the possibilities of prevention and correction of burnout syndrome of students, through the development of their emotional intelligence.

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