



**Dissertation on Learning Differences  
and Messaging Acquisition:**

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# **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**



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## **Abstract**

A study was administered to four individuals involving two quizzes and a short film with six open-ended questions following it. This examination was utilized to evaluate how often individuals use emotional intelligence when trying to understand the feelings of the people around them. However, the findings came out to be different than what was expected. First off, individuals are more likely to be emotionally attentive if they are advised to do so. Second, individuals empathize on different levels. Third, is that ethics drive an individual's level of empathy. The most critical discovery was that there was a strong correlation between ethics and empathy (EI). Being able to make this conclusion, there are still enigmas that are without answers. More research on how ethics and emotional intelligence intertwine should be conducted in the future, for answers about humanity and the difference between emotional quotient (EQ) and intelligence quotient (IQ).

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## **Introduction**

### **What is Emotional Intelligence (EI)?**

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the mindfulness of one's position and of themselves and others, and the ability to sense one's reasoning for behavior through the process of empathy, valuation, and ethics. If this sort of intelligence truly allows for open-mindedness, then it can be utilized as a tool, for understanding multiple perspectives which in turn allows for acceptance of 'difference'. EI also comes in handy when an individual wishes to improve their relationships with others, themselves, their coworkers, their bosses, etc. EI does not receive enough attention, from scholars and should be utilized in everyday life by all persons. By analyzing previous texts and discoveries, I intend to scratch new soil on the topic of EI. In doing so, I will examine what actions should be taken in order for it to be enforced, normalized, and submerged into cultures, especially since many individuals lack the skills it has to offer.

## Review of Texts by Previous Scholars

Texts are organized from oldest to newest.

According to Corey Anton (2001), Formal ethics which is the non-materialistic concern (ought) for others, “further conceives the category of the ought as a category of theoretical consciousness, i.e. it theorizes the ought, and as a result, loses the individual act or deed” (p. 214). In other words, formal ethic is related to EI, because it is the ability to understand and empathize for a position in communication that is not of the (message) sender. This concept is highly significant, because it explains that Emotional Intelligence is not the only the capability to sense one's own concerns, but to understand multiple perspectives, and feel for others. The idea of formal ethics will continue to be emphasized throughout this literature piece.

Nicole Lerner and Peter Salovey, concluded that the two main models to measure EI are the *Ability Model* and the *Mixed Model*, in their journal *Relating Emotional Abilities to Social Functioning: A Comparison of Self-Report and Performance Measures of Emotional Intelligence*. Lerner (2006) states that both models “conceptualize EI as a set of mental skills that can be assessed with performance tests (p. 781).” My analysis will consider the two models mentioned by Lerner and Salovey but through a reception theory approach, and the use of (semi-structured) open-ended interview questions.

Biren Nagda and Patricia Gurin (2007) wrote a scholarly article based on IGD testing, which is an analysis that examines the impact of EI throughout students (academics). It was discovered that through the process of *critical analysis* in IGD testing, allowed students to see *difference* in multiple perspectives and diminish the role of *dominance* in face-to-face interaction (p. 2). Specifically, the notion of *difference* in conversation will be ethnographically tested in this study, and whether or not a

decrease in *difference* yields a decrease in intimidation and exclusion of individuals who do not pursue the same set of ethics.

In the journal *Trait emotional intelligence, conflict communication patterns, and relationship satisfaction* Lynne Smith (2008) explains Emotional Intelligence (EI) as a *trait* in which “individuals who perceived similarity between their own and their spouse’s EI were more satisfied than individuals who saw no similarity.” This discovery signifies, that individuals who have similar ethics and valuation (worth) had high levels of EI in the relationship. Smith also mentioned that often times couples were easy to agree with their partner's traits and positions, even if they didn't self-report them as their own. Even though this study focused primarily on heterosexual couples, I aim to prove that Emotional Intelligence is a skill that allows for satisfaction and understanding of other's positions.

Just like Lerner and Salovey had explained the ability models and mixed models, Bret Benjamin had also done so in his journal on *Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Culture*. However, Benjamin introduced a third model called the *Mental Ability Model*, which evaluates the internal facets of intelligence. This means that the *Mental Ability Model* aims to measure an individual’s capability of answering right-or-wrong answered questions that are based on ethics. These sorts of questions can be difficult to answer, because everyone holds their own views on the world that are slightly different from someone else's. Using a reception approach, I will also examine mental ethics of individuals which will in turn measure one's Emotional Intelligence.

### **Intertwining Concepts with Research Questions**

Throughout the literature pieces, Emotional Intelligence has been considered as a way to understand the ethics, difference, and positions of individuals. The *ability mode*, *mental ability model*,

and *mixed model* have been utilized to measure EI in people during face-to-face interaction. Also, people have been discovered to agree with one's ethics even if they did not self-report it for their own position.

Multiple studies and concepts have erected from Emotional Intelligence, involving many social groups like heterosexual couples, organizational employees, and students. However, it is not concluded how often EI is used on a subconscious level. Hence, Emotional Intelligence is a tool that aims to create empathy and understanding in people based on their social group or ethical beliefs. I intend to discover how capable people are at acquiring EI.

## **Method, Theory, Instrument, and Research Questions**

### **The Method and Theory** (*Reception study: with interview questions*)

Emotional Intelligence typically considered as the ability to sense others and one's own feelings through shared experiences. However, I don't believe this is the case. I find that it's possible that through the use of visuals, emotional quotient (EQ) can be stimulated and measured enough for an individual to feel for the victim of a particular event. Through a reception theory approach, I intend to determine whether or not empathy is a subconscious trait, and if it can be triggered through visual stimulation. With using a reception approach, I am able to evaluate participant responses, and utilize them to help reach a conclusion on Emotional Intelligence (EI).

### **Data Collection Instrument**

The study will consist of two quizzes that evaluate how much emotion participants are, followed by a short film called ReMoved. The goal is to measure how well the participants empathize

and understand the feelings of strangers. Interviews will be held anonymously, to maintain a participant's confidentiality, however scripture will be provided for a thick description. The interview questions are semi-structured so that the overall data analysis is the best of its kind. The questions are also open-ended, so that members of the study have the privilege of expanding on their answers. I intend to make most of my discoveries through the interview questions.

## **Description**

The reception study research questions are designed to allow and anticipate participants into self-expression and *storytelling*. Questions are generic, with semi-structured (improvised) questions, that are directly associated with the story that a participant is telling. Each individual speaker will be asked an average of six open-ended questions with no particular time allotted per interview.

## **Research Questions**

There are enigmas about emotional intelligence that do not have full coverage. Here are a list of unfulfilled concepts:

1. What is the difference between an individual self-reporting their emotional intelligence versus their test results?
2. Is Emotional Intelligence a construct that is only to be activated by one's experiences?

## **INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

**Project Title**

*Emotional Intelligence Evaluation*

**Principal Investigator**

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**Purpose of the Study**

This study is designed to measure the levels of emotional intelligence (empathy) of individuals. You will be evaluated, and data will be collected based on your response(s).

**Procedures**

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: you will be asked to take two quizzes, where you should answer in an honest manner. You will also, watch a short film and then answer open-ended questions based on it.

The interview should take approximately 4-18 minutes.

**Risks and Benefits if Being in the Study**

*The are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study.*

The benefits of participation are: that you will be able to answer interview based questions anonymously, and can make any comments without judgment, which reduces you level of stress during this study.

**Anonymity**

Because you have not signed a sign-up sheet, or any other form that includes your name, your participation in this study is completely anonymous.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw at any time.

Participants were verbally asked *Was there anything that was unclear to you, during this explanation? Please, do not hesitate to ask.* They were also offered definitions for the terminologies below (incase they were unsure):

**Emotional Intelligence:**

The capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal

relationships judiciously and empathetically (Google).

**Sympathy:**

The fact or power of sharing the feelings of another, especially in sorrow or trouble; fellow feeling, compassion, or commiseration (dictionary.com).

**Empathy:**

the psychological identification with or vicarious (imagined) experiencing of the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another (dictionary.com).

**Interview Questions:**

The interview questions for the short film *ReMoved*, were as follows:

1. If there was one emotion you could choose to describe your reaction to this film, what would it be and why?
2. Have you ever had a similar or same experience like the the person who was just exposed? Do you know anyone (other than yourself) who has been through a similar experience?
3. When listening to their story, how did you feel about it? Did you experience any emotional distress for this person? Why?
4. Often times when being exposed to stories do you remember them even after you were exposed to it? In other words, have you ever had a message make it to your long term memory (lifelong)? An, example of this would be an impactful health campaign on texting and driving, and being influenced by it, enough to take action.
5. Do you feel that empathy is only evoked when someone has the same experience as the story teller? Would you say you sympathized or empathized for this person, and why?
6. What was your favorite part of this film? Why?



## Results and Discussion Section

### Results

The results came out very interesting, and full of depth. In response to that, I condensed the open-ended questions so that it was easier to interpret and make sense of. Here are the results after conducting the same study on participants A-D. The following information is based on four participants who participated in a study based on emotional intelligence. Here are the results:

#### ***Chart Formatted Version (quizzes only)***

Participant A (M)	Quiz I: 17/20	Quiz II: 3/4
Participant B (F)	Quiz I: 12/20	Quiz II: 3/4
Participant C (M)	Quiz I: 16/20	Quiz II: 3/4
Participant D (F)	Quiz I: 11/20	Quiz II: 3/4

Legend:

- F: Female
- M: Male

#### ***Scripted Version (with interview)***

- *Participant A*
  - Quiz I: 17/20
  - Questions:
    - 1) Understanding: The participant has had similar experiences that have occurred in their life
    - 2) No
    - 3) The beginning of the video was related to the participant's life, and they stated that they know what it's like to live like that. The participant also said if the film

didn't relate to them as much, they would not feel nearly as bad.

- 4) Yes
- 5) Yes, because the participant knows how challenging it can be to get through those types of situations. Participant restated, that the situation was related to theirs.
- 6) Case worker bringing the brother for Zoey.

- *Participant B*

- Quiz I: 12/20
- Questions:
  - 1) Happiness: the video brought sincere joy.
  - 2) Yes, but it was someone else and not the participant.
  - 3) Yes, because it is undeserving that a child has to go through those types of things. Participant said the story was unethical and unfair.
  - 4) Yes
  - 5) Sympathized; no empathy.
  - 6) When the little boy came out of the car.

- *Participant C*

- Quiz I: 16/20
- Questions:
  - 1) Sympathy: the participant felt bad for the girl having to constantly move from home to home. The participant was saddened by the fact it happens to girls like

Zoey. The participant also expressed their natural frustration, and that folks who take you in probably don't understand your struggle.

- 2) Not exactly, but the participant had experienced moving from place to place.
- 3) Sympathy (again): The participant reported their emotional distress, and believed a kid should just be able to be a kid. The participant also felt that, Zoey believed it was a never ending cycle.
- 4) Yes, but maybe not taking action based on it. Participant read a book that they use for (long-term) life references. Participant learned from book, how to deal with people, and have the capability of understanding their situations.
- 5) Yes, sympathize with events that were related to the participant. The participant reported having sympathy for the times they hadn't been through the situation for themselves.
- 6) When the brother showed up (hand in hand with the moving cycle). The participant said they respected the foster mother for not giving up on Zoey even when it was difficult not to.

- *Participant D*

- Quiz I: 11/20
- Questions:
  - 1) Sympathy: the ending gave the participant a feeling of hope.
  - 2) No, and nobody that the participant knew had been in a similar/same situation.
  - 3) Sadness: A kid should not have to go through the abuse. The participant reported crying.
  - 4) Yes absolutely. The participant stated that smoking campaigns have always

encouraged them to stay away from tobacco/nicotine.

- 5) Empathy: because the participant felt the desire to understand the situation from Zoey's perspective. The participant sympathized in the beginning, but reported empathy in the end, and as time went on.
- 6) The end, where she saw her brother.

Quiz II was disregarded because all of the individuals partaking in the study got the same score. Hence, there was no variation in answers, and no reason to evaluate the results. *A* received a score of 85% while *B* scored 60%. Not to mention *C* scored 80%, while *D* got 55% correct.

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## Discussion

The objective of the study, was designed to measure the amount of sympathy and empathy that individuals can have for someone other than themselves. In this case, the data collection was used to measure the levels of emotional intelligence in a person. However, the data was also used to analyze whether or not EI skills are within individuals or if they are lacking in people. In other words, the study aimed to discover how emotionally intelligent one may be in terms of others. The expected theory was that individuals tend not to have the capabilities for recognizing when one is in emotional distress or being able to understand the multiple perspectives of the world. However, the results were beyond expectations, and new conclusions were made based on the results.

First, it was discovered that individuals are more likely to be emotionally attentive if they are advised to do so. In other words, humans are more likely to pay attention to emotions if they are told to

do so. In the study, participant *A & B*, were given a notice that the questions would evaluate their level of capability in terms of seeking out other's emotional distress, and whether or not they had strong EI skills. Participant *C & D* were only notified that they would be taking a quiz and to try their best, but not to stress over incorrect answers. Second, is that individuals empathize on different levels. Seeing as how the film *ReMoved* was ultimately sad until the end, all participants agreed their favorite part was the final part of the video, however the wording was taken into account. For instance, participant *D*, expressed their joy when Zoey's brother was brought to her. Notice the use of the word *brother*. This signifies that participant *D*, fully understands the feeling of having a brother. As a matter of fact after asking her if she had siblings, she reported having a brother. On the other hand participant *A*, mentioned their relief when the case worker came with her brother. The keywords here are *case worker* and *brother*. After being asked, participant *A* reported having experienced case workers visiting their homes, and also had a brother. Lastly, all participants reported the unethical behavior of the film. This indicates that all participants follow the ethics of their given society, but do not necessarily empathize. It is important to point out that there is a clear difference between knowing your ethics on a logical level, and being able to apply them on an emotional level. In other words, all participants had emotional distress for Zoey, because their line of ethics did not agree with how she was being treated. Putting this concept in another situation, think about circumcision. In Africa, there are multiple types of female genital cutting procedures that are performed to prevent women from rape. However, in America males are circumcised for hygiene purposes, but namely because it's aesthetically pleasing. If you were to ask an American if they thought female genital cutting was unethical, they would most likely say yes, and vice versa.

## Conclusion

Throughout this study, the main objective was to evaluate how often individuals use emotional

intelligence in their lives, especially when recognizing the emotions of others. The expectation was that individuals do not use it nearly enough, and should utilize the skill more often, however, the discoveries that were found were much different. First off, individuals are more likely to be emotionally attentive if they are advised to do so. Second, individuals empathize on different levels. Lastly, is that ethics drive an individual's level of empathy.

All in all, I hope to see more research done based on the connection between ethics and empathy (EI). In doing so, would open up new realms of emotional research, and allow for a better understanding as to why ethics is such an important part of humanity. It's interesting to think that group or individual ideology is still solely driven by some sort of force; perhaps society. How do you feel about human sacrifice? You may be very opposed to the idea of giving up people for invisible causes, however someone from the Aztec tribe (Mexico) may have thought otherwise. Ethics determines how we feel about something, and overrides our ability to see things for ourselves. All participants expressed the unethical treatment that Zoey was put through in the film, and that it was not right she had to go through the things she did.

## **Contribution to the Emotional Field**

Humans are more than capable of seeking out the emotions of others, but it is not often that we are in the mindset to do so. Often times, we act emotionally intelligent when we are expected to. However, people should be emotionally intelligent all the time, in order to increase their levels of open-mindedness. Neuroscientist, Dan Radecki had mentioned, we are biologically wired to think rationally almost always. Rarely do we think more emotionally than logically, and that it's an evolutionary phenomenon. We are just now having the ability to acknowledge other people's emotions, because in our primate days we were only concerned about surviving (TEDx Talks, 2017).

Just like driving, if an individual decides to take an elongated break, they may forget even the simplest task. In terms of EI, this is namely because it's not an innate attribute for humanity. Regardless as to whether or not you already have acquired emotional intelligence, you should work on it everyday. One can practice their EI skills by asking their peers *how they're doing*. Even if your peer does not *directly* appear stressed, it is possible they are *indirectly* stressed, so it is a great idea to ask them regardless. Second, is paying attention to a speaker's (peer's) verbal and non-verbal expressions. For example, If an individual is conveying an irritable look while you're talking about how you're a republican, you may want to ask them *did what I say bother you?* Finally, listen to the multiple perspectives that the world has to offer. For instance, you may believe that abortion is wrong, but your friend may think otherwise. Instead of shutting them out, ask them to elaborate, imagine if it were your take on the controversial topic, and acknowledge their opinion in an unbiased manner. Approaches like these, will enhance your ability to sense emotional distress, which is lacking in humanity on a biological level.

### **Limitations**

Through and through, many interesting discoveries were encountered, however there are a couple of limitations that curtails the key findings. First, this study was given to only four people, meaning there was not a large universe (population) from which data was collected. Having more participants may have allowed for better and more sincere results. Second, is that the participants were not strangers to me. I knew each participant for at least three years prior to conducting a study on them. Not having a variety of individuals, especially strangers may have decreased the amount of diversity, and the opportunity for unbiased data. In other words, I expected certain responses based on the participant, especially since I already knew them.

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