

Emotional intelligence in children with special educational needs

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Abstract: Despite the vigorous discourse surrounding education, current measures remain insufficient for effectuating substantive benefits for children. Guaranteeing the holistic development of children, particularly those with special educational needs, necessitates the provision of universally high-caliber educational experiences. It is critical to cultivate competencies for self-regulation and management of emotions from an early age, which is instrumental in fostering emotional stability and equipping children with the resilience to navigate life's adversities. Individuals with disabilities encounter significant societal disadvantages, arising not only from their inherent circumstances but also from societal reactions and the manner in which they are treated within these social structures. Therefore, in this thesis I have chosen to address two of the most relevant and important issues, the development of emotional and social skills in pre-school children, aged 3-6/7 years, with special educational needs. If this skill is not developed, it can affect the balance of mental health, leading to anxiety, depression, low mood and other repercussions. The role of emotions in each individual's life is as important as life itself. First of all, it should be noted that emotions manifest themselves constantly and differently. Different motives and contexts can provoke positive or negative emotions that cause changes in people's behaviour, the effectiveness and direction of decision-making, the formation of relationships and other aspects of everyday life. Emotional intelligence is an important skill for all children, including those with special needs. They may face unique challenges in developing emotional intelligence, but with appropriate support and interventions, they can still make progress. Once a child develops this skill, it becomes easier for them to control their behaviour, which will lead to optimal social interactions. A child's behaviour can be influenced by how they analyse the emotions conveyed by the people they interact with. So the child shapes and modifies behaviour based on what is shared with him/her through the emotions expressed by others.

Keywords: intelligence, emotions, children, special requirements

1. Emotional intelligence

A pivotal competency for leadership is the aptitude for empathy, which involves discerning and comprehending the emotional states of others. This capacity is intrinsically linked to emotional intelligence, defined as the ability to accurately decode and interpret the emotional expressions and behaviors of others. The development of robust emotional intelligence necessitates an acute self-awareness of one's emotions, coupled with the capacity to identify, manage, and then reciprocate by recognizing and understanding the emotions manifested by others. This skill further entails an understanding of social norms and the contextual backdrop against which emotions are displayed.

The concept of "emotional intelligence" emerged in the scholarly realm in 1990 through the works of distinguished psychologists Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer and has been the subject of extensive scholarly exploration and development by a multitude of researchers since its inception.

Emotional intelligence is a multifaceted construct that typically includes several core components: self-awareness, emotional regulation, intrinsic motivation, empathy, and social skills. Over time, researchers have proposed various models delineating the structure of emotional intelligence, yet these central components are consistently represented across the majority of these frameworks. Additionally, there exist three primary perspectives that have shaped the academic development of affective intelligence as articulated by esteemed scholars in the field.

As defined by John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey (1990), they considered that emotional intelligence portrays "the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions in ways that support thinking, to understand emotions and their meaning, and to effectively regulate emotionality to bring about emotional and intellectual developmental improvement" (Stein, S. J., Book H. E., 2003, pp. 13-17).

These eminent psychologists have formulated the "Emotional Ability (EQ) Model," which posits a theory of emotional intelligence underscoring the salience of cognitive competencies in orchestrating emotions and navigating social interactions (Mayer, J.D., Salovey, P., Caruso, D., 2000). This framework posits a symbiotic relationship between emotion and cognition, suggesting that emotions serve as a repository of knowledge that buttresses social bonds. Consequently, emotions exert a tangible influence on decision-making, the cultivation of relationships, and everyday conduct.

Mayer and Salovey's construct delineates emotional intelligence as comprising four symbiotic competencies:

The capacity to discern emotions, entailing the recognition of emotional states within oneself and others, through cues encompassing verbal and nonverbal channels, including facial expressions, vocal nuances, bodily gestures, and linguistic choices.

The aptitude to employ emotions, which involves the regulation of one's own emotional states to guide cognitive processes and behaviors, as well as the proficiency in leveraging others' emotions to facilitate effective communication and enhance social rapport.

The proficiency in comprehending emotions, referring to the skill in deciphering and contextualizing emotions, understanding their origins, and predicting their potential implications.

The competence in managing emotions, which includes the ability to temper personal emotional responses, mitigate impulsive tendencies, and select contextually suitable emotional reactions during stressful situations, in addition to assisting others in regulating their emotions through communicative strategies and empathetic engagement.

Reuven Bar-On's pioneering model in the domain of emotional and social intelligence has profoundly influenced the field's research trajectory. This model has significantly enriched psychological evaluations by offering an intricate appraisal of emotional and social intelligence, defining it as „an array of emotional and social competencies, skills, and facilitators that impact one's capacity to cope with environmental demands and pressures”(Bar-On, R., 1997).

Bar-On's model is based on a broad definition of emotional intelligence, which includes five main categories: intrapersonal skills (self-awareness, self-control), interpersonal skills (empathy, communication), adaptability (flexibility, adaptability), self-confidence (confidence, self-esteem) and the ability to manage stress (stress resilience, optimism). These five categories are divided into 15 subcategories, which represent specific emotional intelligence skills.

The Bar-On method has been applied in various fields to research and assess emotional intelligence, including education, mental health and organisations. Based on this method, an emotional intelligence assessment tool called the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) was developed and has been used in various studies and research (Bar-On, R., 2006, pp. 14-16).

Goleman describes the term as the ability to identify and control one's own emotions, recognize and understand the feelings of others, and maintain healthy relationships. He outlined five essential elements of emotional intelligence: emotional self-awareness, emotional self-control, motivation, empathy and social skills. In his paper, the writer sums up the idea by stating that „...there is an old-fashioned term that describes all the traits involved in emotional intelligence, namely personality... and the foundation of personality is self-discipline; a life rich in virtues, as philosophers since Aristotle have observed, is based on self-discipline...” (Goleman, D., 2001).

In his book, Daniel Goleman explores Salovey's perspective, which includes Gardner's personal intelligence as part of his basic definition of emotional intelligence and expands these abilities into five main areas (Goleman, D., 2001, pp. 53-72):

1) Knowing personal emotions is being able to notice an experience as it happens. People who are more confident in their feelings are more competent in managing their personal lives. They know their strengths and vulnerabilities and address them in ways that maximise their potential.

2) Emotion management demonstrates the ability to control feelings in an appropriate way, thus representing the ability to develop self-awareness. People who cannot manage their feelings often experience disappointment and despair, while people who are excellent at managing their feelings can restore emotional balance more quickly after encountering obstacles in life.

3) Self-motivation explains that turning feelings into purpose is essential to paying attention, being motivated, being in control and being creative. People with high emotional intelligence are often highly motivated. They are willing to sacrifice immediate results for long-term success. They are efficient, love challenges and are present in everything they do.

4) Recognizing emotions in others (empathy) is a skill built on self-awareness and involves recognizing the emotions of others. Empathetic people pay attention to subtle social cues that indicate other people's needs and desires. They are talented at harnessing social connections, listening and engaging with others. They avoid rigid behavior and hasty judgment, living an honest and unashamed life.

2. Age categories and special educational needs (3-6/7 years - school period)

2.1. Introductory aspects of the pre-school period (3-6/7 years)

The preschool period, also known as the "golden period" of childhood, is the age stage between 3 and 6/7 years, characterized by significant development of physical and mental abilities of the child, progress that allows him to adapt easily to different situations and to carry out his activities efficiently, without being yet subject to pressures and obligations (Sălceanu, C., Enache, R., Marica, M. (coords.), 2015, p. 165).

During this period, the child begins to develop social, emotional, intellectual and motor skills. At the same time, they begin to learn about personal hygiene, nutrition, exercise and ethical and social principles. The child begins to progress in communication and creative skills and is thus prepared for the next stage of life. Some aspects of this age period that need to be mentioned are:

- Physical development. During this time, your child improves his or her fine motor and general skills. They gain more independence and develop their dexterity and stability.

- Social development. At this stage, the child develops social skills through interaction with other children. He learns to communicate, share toys, listen and express his emotions.
- Emotional development. As the child grows, he or she acquires skills in managing emotions and understanding the emotions of others. During this time, his or her personality and lifestyle begin to develop.
- Cognitive development. The child begins to learn simple mathematical concepts, such as numbers and shapes, and develop literacy skills. They also develop their thinking, such as problem solving and reasoning.
- Learning through play. Children develop their skills through play and interactive experiences. They learn through direct experiences such as playing with toys, experimenting with objects or participating in creative activities.
- Learning healthy habits. During this period, children learn about hygiene, nutrition and physical activity.
- Developing creativity. The child begins to develop artistic skills and creativity through drawing, painting and other creative activities.
- Preparing for school. The pre-school stage is crucial for training the child to be ready for education. Learning fundamental skills such as numbers, alphabet and nuances will help prepare them for the next chapter in their lives.

The pre-school period is usually crucial to a child's progress and it is essential to provide a safe and motivating environment for their development. By providing positive role models and encouraging the development of fundamental skills, the child will be able to fulfil his or her full potential and prepare for success at school and adult life.

The pre-school stage is a crucial phase in a child's development, marked by many important physical and mental changes and progress. During this stage, the child develops significant physical and mental skills, such as improved motor coordination and the development of sensory abilities, which facilitate adaptation to the environment. The child's autonomy is also stimulated by learning essential aspects such as personal hygiene, feeding, dressing and handling objects.

At the psychological level, complex mental processes develop and contribute to the emergence of new behavioural traits such as anticipation, organisation and voluntary regulation. In addition, curiosity and desire for knowledge are strongly expressed, encouraging environmental exploration, play and learning. During this period, the primary moral conscience is formed and social coping skills develop, and the foundation of the personality begins to take shape. All these aspects make the pre-school stage essential in the child's formation and development, preparing him/her for the following stages of life (Crețu, T., 2009, pp. 131-132).

According to the definition proposed by Șchiopu and Verza (1997, p. 127) and Golu, Verza and Zlate (1993, p. 77), the preschool period can be divided into three distinct stages.

The early pre-school phase, which includes children aged 3 to 4, is the first stage of their development. At this stage, children face difficulties in adjusting to kindergarten because they are largely tied to adults. Preschoolers are characterised by egocentrism, motor and emotional instability, and the first signs of a prestige crisis are beginning to show.

Children's main activity during this period is manipulative play, combined with various forms of systematic activity, of short duration and simple content. The provision of adult attention and support is crucial in the development of children's social and emotional skills. Age-appropriate activities, including games, can be used to encourage children to explore and discover new things in their environment, which can have a major impact on their future development (Șchiopu, Verza, 1997 & Golu, Verza, Zlate, 1993).

The second phase, middle preschool, refers to children aged 4 to 5 years, showing a marked development of complex mental processes, leading to the emergence of new behavioural traits such as anticipation, organisation and self-regulation. In addition, there is a strong curiosity and desire for knowledge, which encourages environmental exploration, play and learning.

The last sub-period, the early pre-school period, covers the age range 5-6/7 years and is characterised by the formation of primary moral awareness, the growth of the ability to adapt to the social environment and the development of the foundations of personality.

These stages are relevant in determining the characteristics of psychological and behavioural development during the pre-school period and can provide a useful basis for the design and development of appropriate educational programmes for each age group.

3. Delimiting the concept of special educational needs (SEN)

The conceptualization of Special Educational Needs (SEN) necessitates an appreciation for the distinctive requirements of students and the determination of requisite resources to fulfill these needs. Such resources may encompass intervention programs, specialized educational support, customized technologies, medical equipment, as well as the accessibility of school buildings and facilities. Additionally, the engagement of parents and the local community is paramount. To assist students with SEN in achieving their learning objectives and to progress in their educational journey, it is imperative to provide appropriate specialized education. The scholarly literature employs a plethora of terms to define the subject concerning individuals who require special education. This delineation is essential to accurately understand the phenomena in question. The terminology includes, but is not limited to, deficiency, handicap, disability, and special educational needs.

The concept of „handicap” refers to a situation wherein a limitation or deficiency hinders an individual from fulfilling a socially expected role, potentially leading to social disadvantage. Individuals with handicaps encounter societal and physical barriers that inhibit equal access to community life and thus require protective measures and support for social inclusion and integration (Carantina, D., Totolan, D.M., 2007, pp. 2-4).

„Disability” pertains to the impairments or difficulties in performing daily activities and in full participation in society due to a deficiency or chronic condition. These impediments may arise from physical barriers or discrimination and can vary depending on the severity of the deficiency and the social context.

Literature, media and NGOs in Romania have chosen to replace the term disability with the term handicap, which has been included in various regulations and official documents of the basic law 448/2006. The term disability was introduced in our country's legislation after 2000, mainly as an alternative to the notion of disability, being mentioned more precisely in the HG no. 1251/2005 (Carantina, D., Totolan, D.M., 2007, pp. 2-4).

The concept of 'special educational needs' was first introduced in the UK in 1978 with the publication of the Warnock Report, an important document for the reform of special education in the UK, and in the 1990s it was adopted by UNESCO terminology.

„Special Educational Needs (SEN) are educational needs complementary to the general objectives of school education, needs that require schooling adapted to individual particularities and/or characteristics of a disability (or learning disability), as well as specific intervention, through rehabilitation/recovery and appropriate compensation” (Carantina, D., Totolan, D.M., 2007, pp. 4-6).

Special educational needs highlight the need for additional educational attention and assistance to some children, a form of positive discrimination to compensate for their

disadvantages. This assistance is essential to guarantee equal opportunities, access and participation in education and social life.

Although the concepts of ESC and special education may seem similar, special education is considered an additional component of mainstream education and must be available to all children/pupils.

4. Research methodology

4.1. Objectives

The present research endeavors to fulfill a series of explicitly delineated objectives:

The initial objective is to elucidate the divergences in emotional capabilities as discerned by parents and educators, pertinent to the developmental echelon of children's emotional intelligence. This includes the breadth of understanding, articulating, and self-regulating emotional states.

The subsequent objective is to elucidate the disparities in social competencies as perceived by parents and educators, in association with the level of children's emotional intelligence. This involves the capacity for rule adherence, engaging in social exchanges, and exhibiting prosocial conduct.

The tertiary objective is to explore the putative association between emotional and social competencies as recognized by parents and educators.

4.2. Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: It is postulated that discrepancies exist between parental and educational professionals' perceptions regarding a child's emotional competence.

Hypotheses 2: It is postulated that variations are present between the perceptions of parents and educators concerning the child's social abilities.

Hypothesis 3: It is posited that there is an associative link within parents' perceptions between the child's emotional expression and social connectedness as it pertains to the subjects engaged in the study.

Hypothesis 4: It is conjectured that an association exists within educators' perceptions between the child's emotional expression and social interactions in relation to the subjects involved in the research.

4.3. Study participants

The sample selected for this study consists of 50 pediatric subjects aged between 3 and 7 years, diagnosed with various disabilities, including Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), learning disorders, intellectual disabilities, Down syndrome, as well as visual and auditory sensory disabilities.

Participants were recruited from various institutions specialized in therapy and rehabilitation located in the city of Constanța. The selection was based on informed consent from the parents, who agreed to complete and submit questionnaires via an online tool facilitated by the Google Forms platform, extending also to the educators involved in the process.

The study sample is gender-balanced, comprising 25 boys and 25 girls, reflecting a diversity of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The subjects were grouped into distinct age categories to allow for a rigorous comparative analysis.

<i>Age</i>	<i>number of subjects</i>
3 years	0 subjects
4 years	4 subjects
5 years	9 subjects
6 years	10 subjects
7 years	27 subjects

4.4. Research tools

To measure children's emotional intelligence, two standardised tests adapted to their developmental level were used, the „Screening for Emotional Competence (SCE)” and the „Screening for Social Competence (SCS)”, each with two variants: one for parents and one for educators.

5. Study results

Hypothesis 1: It is assumed that there is a difference in parents' and educator's perception of the child's emotional competence

Table 1. Mann-Whitney U comparison coefficient.

	emotional competence parents	emotional competence educators
Mann-Whitney U	204,500	241,500
Wilcoxon W	555,500	592,500
Z	-2,090	-1,371
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,037	,170

a. Grouping Variable: Sex

Mann-Whitney test results indicate significant differences in parents' perceptions of their child's emotional competence, as $\text{sig.} = 0,037 < 0,05$. Therefore, we can conclude that there is a significant difference in parents' perception of child's emotional competence.

On the other hand, regarding educators' perceptions of the child's emotional competencies, the Mann-Whitney test results indicate that there is no significant difference because $\text{sig.} = 0,170 > 0,05$. This means that there is not enough statistical evidence to conclude that there is a significant difference in educator perception.

The significant difference in parents' perceptions might suggest that parents observe or prioritise different aspects of their children's emotional competence compared to educators. Parents might have a more intimate or personal perspective, while educators might evaluate emotional competence in a broader context or in comparison to a larger group of children.

Findings suggest that emotional competence development programs could benefit from close collaboration between parents and educators to ensure a balanced assessment and comprehensive approach to children's emotional needs.

Discrepancy between parents and educators may also indicate the need for training and alignment of assessment strategies to ensure greater consistency in recognizing and supporting children's emotional competence.

Based on the information gathered and the tests carried out, we find that the hypothesis formulated, which assumed that there is a significant difference between parents' and educators'

perceptions of children's understanding of emotions, is confirmed only to a certain extent. Analysis of the results shows that parents' and educators' perceptions differ in this respect.

Several studies have found significant discrepancies in parents' and educators' perceptions of emotional intelligence in children with special needs. For example, a 2014 study published in the *International Journal of Special Education* examined parents' and teachers' perceptions of emotional intelligence in children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and found significant differences in their perceptions. After analyzing the results, a significant discrepancy was observed between teachers' and parents' perceptions of emotional intelligence in children with ADHD, with parents scoring higher. These findings could have important implications for educational strategies applied to children with ADHD, highlighting the need for effective communication between parents and teachers to ensure an accurate assessment of the needs of these children.

It is therefore important to continue research in this area in order to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions and requirements of children with special educational needs so that appropriate methods can be developed to help them develop their emotional and social skills.

Hypothesis 2: It is assumed that there is a difference according to the perception of the parents and the educator regarding the social skills of the child

Tabel 2. Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
SC_Social_Parents	Equal variances assumed	,008	,931	-1,463	48	,150	-6,192	4,234	-14,705	2,320
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,468	47,995	,149	-6,192	4,218	-14,673	2,289
SC_Social_Educators	Equal variances assumed	1,948	,169	-1,015	48	,315	-2,827	2,786	-8,429	2,775
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,006	44,354	,320	-2,827	2,810	-8,489	2,835

The Levene's test is utilized to evaluate the homogeneity of variances across groups. For the parental cohort, an F-statistic of .008 and a corresponding significance value (Sig.) of .931 suggest homogeneity of variances, thereby validating the use of the t-test assuming equal variances. Analogously, within the educator cohort, an F-statistic of 1.948 and a significance level of .169 also support the premise of equal variances.

The independent samples t-test is applied to assess whether there is a statistically significant discrepancy between the mean scores of two distinct groups.

In the case of parents, a t-statistic of -1.463 with 48 degrees of freedom and a two-tailed significance (Sig.) of .150 indicates no statistically significant disparity between the mean perceptions of parents and educators regarding children's social competencies, as evidenced by a p-value exceeding the .05 threshold.

Similarly, for educators, a t-statistic of -1.015 with 48 degrees of freedom and a significance level of .315 further denotes no substantial divergence between the groups.

The absence of a significant variance statistically implies that the perceptions of parents and educators regarding children's social skills are congruent. This homogeneity suggests that both cohorts share a collective understanding or observation of the children's social competencies within the examined sample.

From a psychosocial and educational perspective, this confluence of perceptions could imply that interventions or programs designed to enhance children's social competencies might be effectively implemented in a concerted effort by both parents and educators, given the consensus in their perceptions.

The empirical evidence evaluated does not substantiate the hypothesis positing a substantive divergence between parental and educational professionals' assessments of children's social competencies. Such a result may denote a congruence between the two viewpoints, which augurs well for the uniformity of interventions aimed at children's educational and developmental progress. It must be emphasized that these conclusions are contingent upon the particular sample and methodological approach employed in this investigation and ought to be construed within the ambit of these methodological confines.

Hypothesis 3: It is assumed that there is a correlation in the parent's perception between the expression of emotions and social relationship in terms of the subjects participating in the study

Table 4. Correlations

		SC_Emoational_Parents	SC_Social_Parents
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,429**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,002
	N	50	50
	Correlation Coefficient	,429**	1,000
SC_Social_Parents	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	.
	N	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regarding Hypothesis 3, the data indicate that there is a correlation between the parent's perception of emotional expression and the social relationships of the study subjects.

Spearman's correlation (Spearman's rho) measures the strength and direction of the association between two ordered variables. The Spearman correlation value between emotional and social competence as perceived by parents is .429**, indicating a moderately positive correlation between the two sets of scores.

The p-value associated with this correlation is .002, which is well below the standard threshold of .01, indicating that this correlation is statistically significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

A moderately positive correlation means that as emotional competencies, as perceived by parents, increase, so do social competencies, indicating that children who are more emotionally competent tend to be more socially competent as perceived by parents. This correlation underscores the critical role of emotional maturation within the sphere of social connectedness. Initiatives designed to enhance the recognition and articulation of emotions may consequently yield advantageous outcomes for the augmentation of children's social competencies.

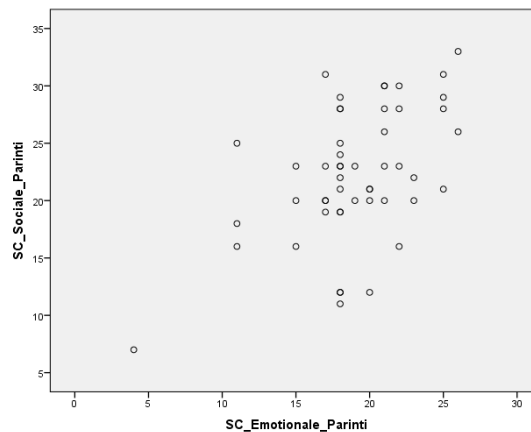


Chart 1. Point cloud

The cloud of dots indicates the positive correlation between the two variables: expression of emotions and social relatedness.

Following the statistical representation of the correlation we obtained a value less than 0.05 (positive correlation), which means that we have a direct correlation, the two correlated variables vary in the same direction. There is a correlation between the two variables, so the hypothesis is confirmed.

A positive correlation between emotion expression and social relatedness suggests that when children with special educational needs express more emotions, they are generally better able to relate socially with other children. This may suggest that expressing emotions may be important in developing their communication and social relatedness skills.

Hypothesis 4: It is assumed that there is a correlation in the educator's perception between the expression of emotions and social relationships as they relate to the subjects participating in the study.

Tabel 5. Correlations

		SC_Emotionale_ Educators	SC_Social_ Educators
Spearman's rho	SC_Emotionale_ Educators	Correlation Coefficient	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,308*
		N	50

SC_Social_Educators	Correlation Coefficient	.308*	1,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.030	.
	N	50	50

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

To conduct a statistical and psychological analysis of the data delineated in Table 5, we shall interpret the Spearman correlation coefficient (Spearman's rho) in relation to educators' assessments of the children's emotional and social competencies.

The computed Spearman's rho is .308* for the association between emotional and social competencies as rated by educators. A coefficient of .308 denotes a positive correlation of weak to moderate strength between the two constructs.

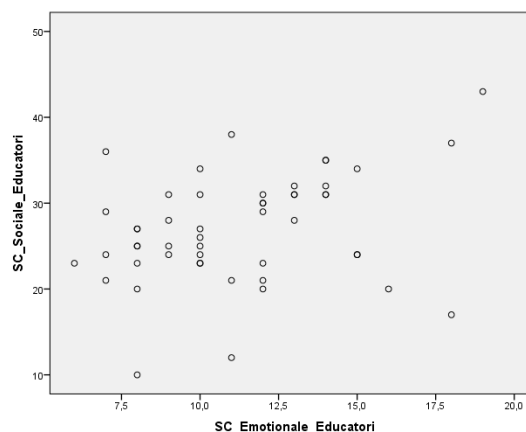
The significance level (Sig. (2-tailed)) is reported at .030, indicating there is a 3% likelihood that this correlation could appear by random chance if no actual link exists within the population from which the sample is derived. Given that this p-value falls below the conventional threshold of .05, the correlation is deemed statistically significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Regarding the number of cases (N), the correlation was calculated using a sample of 50 subjects, which is adequate to provide a basis for statistical conclusions.

A weak to moderate correlation suggests that, in educators' perceptions, there is a link between children's emotional and social skills, but it is not strong. This may indicate that although there is an association between children's ability to express their emotions and their social skills, other factors may also play an important role in social relating.

The results may suggest the need to approach emotional and social education in a more integrated way in the curriculum and in pedagogical practices, since development in one of these areas could positively influence the other.

As I stated before, there is a statistically significant correlation, although not very strong, between the educators' perception regarding the expression of emotions and the social relationship of the children participating in the study. This result partially supports the initial hypothesis and emphasizes the importance of recognizing the interdependence between emotional and social skills in children's education. This finding could inform educational strategies that promote a holistic approach to child development.



Graph 2. Cloud of points

After graphing the data in the form of a cloud of points, a positive correlation was observed between the two variables: expression of emotions and social relation. To confirm this

observation, a statistical analysis was performed which suggests the existence of a direct correlation between the two variables, i.e. they vary in the same direction. Even if the correlation is quite low, the findings suggest that the initial assumption is confirmed, which indicates the existence of a connection between the expression of emotions and social relations in children with special educational needs, according to the opinion of educators.

The investigation into emotional intelligence among children with special educational needs, aged 3 to 7 years, employing questionnaires distributed to parents and educators for evaluating the children's socio-emotional competencies, constitutes a significant scholarly addition to the disciplines of special education and child development. The findings from this research may facilitate the formulation of enhanced intervention and support paradigms for children with special educational needs. This advancement could be furthered by refining the comprehension of the disparate perspectives held by parents and educators concerning the children's social and emotional aptitudes.

Research indicates that minors with special educational needs may encounter obstacles in developing their emotional intelligence, which can negatively affect their social and academic performance.

There are many factors that can affect the development of emotional intelligence in children with CES, including mental health conditions, learning and communication problems, and adverse life experiences. These children may be less able to understand and express emotions, develop healthy social relationships, and manage conflict constructively. For example, negative experiences related to stigma and discrimination can negatively affect their emotional and social development. Also, restricted access to resources and lack of adequate educational support may be contributing factors to children's disadvantages in developing emotional intelligence.

Thus, research that focuses on the growth of emotional intelligence in children with CES is of particular importance to discover the elements that affect this development and to implement tactics and interventions to help them acquire the necessary skills to manage their lives social and academic.

The study presented serves as an exemplar of research concentrated on the advancement of emotional intelligence in children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and may contribute to the formulation of more effective and tailored intervention methods for this demographic. Such methods might include the incorporation of emotional intelligence development into educational curricula, the training of parents and educators in specific strategies to bolster the social and emotional competencies of children, as well as the establishment of positive and supportive learning environments for children with SEN.

If we wanted to assign meaning to the codes to put the results into context, we can use the red code to represent children from the vulnerable group who face significant difficulties in developing emotional capacities. In such situations, an advanced assessment by a specialist in psychology or psychiatry is crucial, and psycho-educational or psychiatric intervention measures are needed to support these children.

Conclusions

The present study initiated in the therapeutic and rehabilitation environment, involves a sample of children with special educational requirements, aged between 3 and 7 years, manifesting various pathological conditions such as Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Attention Deficit Disorder and Hyperactivity (ADHD), learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, Down Syndrome, as well as sensory impairments.

The research examined the specifics of emotional intelligence development in this demographic, highlighting difficulties in emotional expression and regulation, socialization, interpreting interpersonal affective signals, as well as self-regulation of impulses and behavioral adaptability. These difficulties have major relevance in the social and academic integration of the subjects, simultaneously affecting their psychological well-being. We emphasize the importance of assessment and intervention in the development of emotional intelligence to optimize individual potential and overall quality of life.

The applied methodology includes the use of two standardized assessment tools, addressed to parents and educational professionals, to measure specific dimensions of socio-emotional functioning.

The objectives of the research project aimed at identifying discrepancies in the perception of socio-emotional skills between parents and teachers and exploring the correlation between these skills.

Data analysis revealed partial differences between parents' and educators' perceptions, emphasizing the need for communicative synergy for adequate assessment and educational intervention. Statistical significance tests did not indicate significant differences in the perception of emotional competence between the two groups; however, T-tests indicated differences in perceived social skills, with parents reporting higher socioemotional performance.

The study suggests a positive correlation between emotional expression and social competence, underlining the importance of developing intervention programs that facilitate the expression of emotions for better social integration. The results also emphasize the importance of concomitant factors such as cognitive development and health status in children's socialization ability.

Interprofessional synergy is essential to addressing the complex educational and social needs of these children, and collaboration between educational professionals can strengthen students' skills and enhance the educational experience.

Further research in this area may benefit not only children with special needs but also their carers by developing personalized educational strategies and promoting a deeper understanding of the challenges these children face. Rigorous, ethical and professional research is essential to maximize positive impact on students and facilitate a future filled with opportunity.

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