

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: FOCUS ON THE MSCEIT

Anders Gade (organizer)

"It is not just IQ, but emotional intelligence that matters". This quotation is from the popular science bestseller Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 1995) which made the term emotional intelligence familiar to almost everyone, yet left many psychologists sceptical of the concept both in terms of its validity as an independent construct and whether it could be measured. In spite of the scepticism, efforts to measure and apply emotional intelligence have flourished in the last 15 years. Some emotional intelligence tests rely on self reports, and others are performance based.

The aim of this symposium is to present and discuss what may be the most serious – in both theoretical underpinnings and empirical research – performance or ability measure of emotional intelligence: the Mayer Salovey Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT). This test consists of eight subtests in four "branches" (i) Perceiving Emotions, which are two versions of the familiar emotional recognition tasks; (ii) Using Emotions, which examines a person's ability to use emotions to facilitate cognitive processes; (iii) Understanding Emotions, which purports to measure the ability to understand the relationships between different emotions and how they may progress, change, and combine, as well as how emotions may arise from and facilitate social situations; (iv) Managing Emotions, which concerns the control of both one's own emotions and those of others so that they can be used effectively.

We will describe the MSCEIT and its structure and psychometric properties based on both published data and our own data from two studies of normal subjects, including the standardization sample (N: 1000) in Denmark. We will - based on a large sample of normal subjects also tested with traditional neuropsychological measures and personality inventories – discuss whether the MSCEIT is indeed a unique and distinct measure of emotional intelligence, or whether its correlations to IQ, executive and other cognitive measures, or personality are so high as to threaten this purported uniqueness.

Studies of the neurobiology of single elements of emotional intelligence are at hand (cf. this meeting on "the social brain"!), but studies on the neural bases of individual differences in emotional intelligence as measured by the MSCEIT or other emotional intelligence tests are scarce. So are intervention studies. One speculation is that emotional intelligence may in part be mediated by serotonergic systems. We have data to address such question, and we will present the analyses if they are ready by August.

Authors:

Gade, Anders; Senior lecturer, Copenhagen: Introduction to the concept of emotional intelligence: Is it valid, and can it be measured?

Hartman, Peter; Copenhagen: Psychometric properties of the MSCEIT – Danish standardization.

Meldal, Eva; Copenhagen: Emotional intelligence (MSCEIT) : Effects of gender, age, IQ and cognitive abilities.