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## Emotional intelligence: A study of the TEIQue-SF applied to potential leaders in the university environment

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Emotional intelligence has recently received considerable attention in academic and applied contexts. It is identified as an important part of an individual's ability to contribute to organisational success. Emotional intelligence is becoming increasingly relevant in many fields, including business. This current prominence motivates different currents of work to suggest the idea that emotional intelligence is an important factor for effective leadership in organisations.

Our study focused on the analysis of the emotional intelligence of university students for two reasons: on the one hand, the task of leadership is a complex task, both because of the functions developed in themselves, and because of the skills and requirements needed. On the other hand, university students, particularly those related to management studies, can potentially be involved in future selection processes for positions of responsibility.

With regard to the structure of our study, the present work is divided into four parts, the first part is made up of the introduction, as explained above, where the importance of the subject, the contribution of our work and the objectives set out in it are presented. The second part corresponds to the theoretical framework, where the concept of emotional intelligence is analysed, and the different measures for assessing emotional intelligence are presented. Likewise, it describes how emotional intelligence is related to leadership within the main existing research in the literature. The third part shows the methodology applied and the results extracted from the research. Finally, in the fourth part we formulate the conclusions and discussion and future lines of research.

The process carried out to find out the degree of such intelligence, to predict their leadership abilities and their possibilities of adaptation to relevant roles, has been instrumented through an adaptation of



the Petrides Self-Report questionnaire in its short form. Similarly, we have sought to identify the main dimensions that make up emotional intelligence, based on an initial research proposal by the aforementioned author.

With regard to the aim of our work, we intend to analyse the emotional intelligence of university students. To do so, we used an adaptation of the Petrides Self-Report questionnaire (Petrides, 2009) and identified the dimensions that make up emotional intelligence by means of a factor analysis.

For the development of this work and to obtain the results set as objectives, a survey was developed focused on the quantification and systematic review of emotional traits and leadership. These questionnaires were elaborated by students from different branches of the Faculty of Economics and Business Studies. A typical quantitative descriptive methodology study was carried out with 511 students from the University of Malaga (Spain).

The procedure followed in the research does not follow the classic phases proposed in these cases, since it has been carried out by the students during this period of pandemic and always virtually. Using a Likert scale questionnaire (1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest score and 5 the highest) developed with the option of personalised surveys on the virtual campus of the University of Malaga. The students were instructed on how to answer the questionnaire. The data collection procedure began in December 2020 and the possibility of responses was closed in May 2021.

Students were asked to answer the questionnaire anonymously in no more than 35 minutes. As they were of legal age, no authorisation was required. The results found regarding the self-assessment of university students show a very small standard error of the mean, meaning that the answers collected are fairly accurate with respect to reality. Therefore, in conclusion, in the questions posed regarding self-assessment of competences and emotional intelligence to assume positions of responsibility, it can be affirmed that the students show a medium-high level of emotional intelligence. This reflects a clear tendency to offer a high level of self-assessment, showing a significant level of self-confidence and security. In addition, among the final considerations, different possible lines of future research have been suggested, seeking alternatives to implement measures to mitigate the subjectivity in the assessments, through the questionnaires themselves or the design of the questions, or proposing the design of new teaching methodologies to develop the dimensions of students' emotional intelligence identified through this study.

The vertiginous advance of information and communication technologies has been taking place at a faster pace in recent decades than in any other period in the past and has had an amplifying effect on human intelligence.

People, through their skills, abilities, intelligences, attitudes, motivational elements and even their level of personal commitment, are the real differentiator between similar companies. They explain, in themselves, the mission of their organisations and their place in the market and, at the same time, what they are doing to achieve what they want to become.

The intangible asset of the company is more difficult to copy. The best workers, those who use their best qualities, cannot be copied and, therefore, intelligence is what can really make the competitive difference. And this reality is far from static, but like the environment, it is also convulsive and highly competitive, so that the absence of excellent employee management and planning can lead to a high potential loss of trust, positioning and results in a relatively short space of time.

Modern economic theories that used to refer to business research on employees as "human resource management" now prefer to refer to it as "human relations management", because the potential that is attributed to people is multiplied by taking into account the possibilities that can be accessed through the relationship between workers and others: their interaction, communication, synergies, feedback and continuous learning lead to optimal results of continuous improvement.

One of the most influential and developed theories on the subject of interpersonal relationships at work is "emotional intelligence".

This work deals with a study on the emotional intelligence of university students, with the aim of assessing, a priori, their competences and abilities to successfully occupy and perform relevant or responsible positions in the future.



We can understand the enormous complexity involved in facing the tasks of a manager or middle manager, as well as the requirements of competencies and skills needed to undertake effective management, both in terms of technical and professional aspects, as well as in terms of relational and interpersonal qualities.

Managing people has never been easy. The subjectivity, the circumstances to which Ortega y Gasset alluded, the motivations and preferences, the character and attitude of each person, and their individual consideration or through the group or groups to which they belong or would like to belong, represent such a wide range of so many assumptions and situations that taking a decision on the management of people is a difficult task.

The same decision can have very different and even contradictory effects to its initial objective. This is precisely why it is still common to find companies where there is a tendency to simplify this management, instead of optimising it and benefiting from its advantages; and we see, all too often, managers who only want their employees to comply with their instructions. However, what employees say and, above all, what they do absolutely delimits and defines what an organisation is and what it does, what it aims to be and what it can become. Therefore, proper employee management has a direct and crucial impact on what the company is today and what it can become in the future.

One of these management skills, essential for effective management, is emotional intelligence, understood as the ability to perceive and express emotion, that is, to recognise our own feelings and those of others (Mayer et al., 2000; Goleman, 1995). Likewise, an adequate management of all these personal emotions is necessary in order to catalyse and correctly focus problem solving and the search for opportunities.

It has also been the aim of this work to identify the main dimensions that make up emotional intelligence, based on an initial research proposal according to the model established by Petrides.