

Emotional Intelligence as a Factor against Burnout in Female Students and Teachers

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Abstract: A joint analysis of the concepts of "emotional intelligence" and "burnout" allows finding new ways to protect against the adverse effects of chronic stress. It is known that emotional competencies are determined by gender and gender, but this aspect needs to be clarified. A longitudinal study was conducted in a female sample (575 students and 96 teachers from different regions of Ukraine) to determine the dynamics of burnout in calm and stressful periods and trace the correlation of symptoms with emotional abilities. The structural components of emotional intelligence (reflection, self-regulation, empathy, expressiveness, and acceptance of one's own emotions) and manifestations of burnout were measured; three diagnostic sections were made at the beginning of the academic year, after the winter and spring examination sessions. Significant growth of all burnout indicators during the annual training cycle (MANOVA) was recorded. The effect of the accumulation of fatigue (exhaustion) was robust in teachers and graduate students. At the same time, after the session, students grew a sense of self-efficacy, compensating for the resources spent. Comparison of means in six subsamples of students in grades 1-5 and teachers (ANOVA) showed that structural changes in emotional competencies describe the adaptive potential of a certain age period. The developed empathy and self-regulation are the main signs of women's emotional maturity after graduation. The structure of correlations between burnout parameters and emotional competencies differed in different groups. The most significant contribution to preventing burnout in students is made by reflection and self-regulation, in teachers — by self-regulation, empathy, and acceptance of one's feelings. The negative correlation between emotional abilities and symptoms of burnout is exacerbated during times of stress. It is concluded that there are two mechanisms of the protective influence of emotional intelligence: direct, which prevents exhaustion by controlling and regulating negative emotions, and indirect, through a sense of self-efficacy resulting from the successful overcoming of professional challenges.

Keywords: Emotional competencies, emotional maturity, self-regulation, self-efficacy, professional stress.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) and burnout are new psychological terms that became extremely popular in the late 20th century, marking a change in humanitarian priorities and a growing focus on human emotionality. These concepts are now well known not only to mental health specialists but to every educated person.

Burnout syndrome aptly describes the phenomenon of the loss of performance and professional motivation and the consequence of the accumulation of chronic stresses at work. This problem was first described in the 1980s for workers of helping professions due to emotionally intense communication with mainly

disadvantaged recipients. Today, it has spread to almost all areas of employment and is spreading like a virus to entire collectives. The three-dimensional model by Maslach is the leading among the many attempts to explain the mechanisms of burnout. It describes the gradual development of three key symptoms: overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment [1, 2]. The modern definition of symptoms tries to move away from particular professions. Burnout negatively affects a person's well-being and mood, reduces work involvement, impairs the quality and productivity of work, leads to social or intrapersonal conflicts; the person loses health and life satisfaction in the most severe cases [3].

Over the past decades, scholars have made significant progress in explaining the organizational

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conditions that cause burnout and the factors that prevent it [4, 5]. But burnout is unlikely to disappear even with organizations' ongoing efforts to optimize working conditions and reduce stress. Moreover, every year the intensity of labor increases; competition is growing, new previously unknown stressors are emerging. Therefore, scientific research should focus on identifying internal resources that will help workers manage their own experiences and mental health in different circumstances of professional activity.

The concept of EI emerged as part of the theory of multiple intelligences and was initially interpreted as the ability to perceive, express, understand, control, and regulate one's own and other people's emotions, effectively use them to improve thinking, activity, and self-development [6]. The idea of controlling emotions by the mind gained popularity quickly. Emotional intelligence is now considered a fundamental guarantee of successful adaptation, psychological well-being, social and professional success, "taking away" these honorary functions from academic intelligence [7]. Many theoretical models of EI have been developed to cover a large number of cognitive abilities, personality traits, and social skills [8-11].

Thus the concept of emotional competence [12] includes eight types of abilities: realize their own feelings; distinguish the emotions of other people; use the vocabulary and forms of expression of emotions typical in this culture, learn cultural scenarios and connect emotions with social roles; empathically engage in other people's experiences; understand how the expression of one's emotions affects others, and take this into account in behavior; cope with negative feelings using self-regulation strategies; realize that the nature of the relationship largely depends on how they express emotions; be emotionally adequate, accept one's own emotions and meet one's own ideas of the desired emotional balance. This understanding of emotional abilities (competencies) allows correlating them with certain professional activities and significant results in it.

Long before the emergence and popularization of EI theories in Ukraine, powerful scientific schools studied emotional regulation problems. They focused on *emotional maturity* — a personal integrative quality that describes the adequacy of emotional response in certain socio-cultural conditions. [13] substantiated the structure of emotional maturity, which included three components: empathy (the ability to feel and understand other people's experiences, respond to

them, and use these abilities in the communication), expression (vivid reflection of emotions in facial expressions, pantomime, expressive actions, intonation, their translation to others) and self-regulation (the ability to regulate their emotions in communication and thus influence the organization and behavior of others). These qualities help to resolve emotive situations of professional activity and successfully achieve the set goals. In their works [14] study the genesis of emotional maturity in adolescence and youth. [15] explores emotionality in the structure of personality traits, including in the regulation of professional activity. The original concept of *traumatic emotional experience* [16, 17] explains emotional immaturity through infantile response strategies, rigidity and fixation of experiences, potentiation of negative emotionality, and "sticking" of emotions, distorting the perception of the surrounding reality and causes days adaptation.

The definitions of "emotional competence" and "emotional maturity" are often used along with the concept of EI. In this paper, we do not focus on the nuances of content (which intersects wholly or partially) and use them as synonymous concepts representing one socio-psychological phenomenon — the general ability to deal with one's own emotions, which is gradually formed in ontogenesis.

Since burnout and emotional intelligence belong to one phenomenological field — human emotional life, the connection between them is expected. Many studies confirm that the level of EI is negatively correlated with burnout and is a powerful predictor of efficacy and job satisfaction. These effects are the same in different countries and professional groups: among teachers [18-20], medical staff [21], social workers [22], managers and salespeople [23], pupils and students [24, 25].

Researchers explain the mechanism of emotional intelligence's effect on burnout in different ways. Through self-regulation, it can be direct, which mitigates the destructive effects of negative emotions for work and restrains emotional exhaustion [26]. But most authors adopt a mediation model in which stress levels mediate the link between EI and burnout [27]. People with a pronounced EI trait believe that they can identify and regulate their own and other people's emotions and reactions; this means that they can better cope with stress at work. Perfect management of stressful situations leads to reduced anxiety and the development of *self-efficacy* — confidence in one's

ability to cope with difficulties [11]. Therefore, individuals with high levels of EI tend to view challenging situations not as stress or threat but as a challenge; this significantly reduces the reactivity to stressful events at both the psychological and physiological levels [21]. In this regard, resilience is studied — a personality trait that underlies the ability to experience stress constructively. A robust indirect effect of EI trait on burnout mediated via anxiety and resilience was found [25].

Besides, many empirical models of mediation were developed: [24] substantiated a model in which burnout mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction in students. The model by [28] represents burnout as a mediator between organizational justice and work misbehavior, with EI acting as a buffer to mitigate the relationship between working conditions and burnout. [23] showed that the relationship between EI and burnout is mediated by the psychological capital of employees — key personality traits that meet the standard of positive organizational behavior and allow achieving the most effective results (self-efficacy, hope, optimism, persistence).

The mediation model, in which EI ensures the effectiveness of actions in stressful situations and accordingly reduces anxiety, works only in male samples [19]. In women, EI directly determines burnout reactions and has no significant effect on stress and anxiety. Compared to men, women are known to be more vulnerable and sensitive to negative emotional states, more prone to anxiety, and assess their EI lower (the latter is not related to the actual level of abilities but with the peculiarities of self-esteem "females' self-derogatory bias") [29]. Brudnik M [30] found gender differences in the staging of development of burnout symptoms: women are characterized by macro-path, where occupational stress leads to exhaustion or reduction of personal achievements; at

high levels of exhaustion, they begin to depersonalize students and burn out. Therefore, the study of EI and burnout should take into account gender specifics.

Thus, despite the theoretical and empirical development of EI and burnout, the important issue of the mechanisms of the interrelationship between these phenomena remains unresolved. It is impossible to build effective psychological support programs without this understanding. The literature review has led us to the hypothesis that the protective effect of emotional intelligence on the likelihood of burnout should increase during periods of increased workload and stress.

This research aims to determine the dynamics of burnout in relatively calm and stressful periods of professional activity and trace the relevant relationships of burnout reactions with the competencies that are part of emotional intelligence.

METHODS

Sample Description

The survey involved students and teachers of psychological and pedagogical specialties of three universities from different regions of Ukraine (central, southern, and western). The majority of respondents were women, which is in line with the socio-demographic characteristics of the profession, so when analyzing the data, it was decided to focus on the characteristics of the female population. At the beginning of the study, the survey involved 716 people, of which 671 participants (93.7%) passed all three stages of the survey. The sample roughly equally represents students of different grades and teachers (Table 1).

The participants' age and life/professional experience are important in the context of the level of

Table 1: Composition and Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=671, all Women)

Groups of female participants	Number	% of the sample	Age		
			interval	M	SD
1 st grade	131	19.52	16-20	17.1	0.44
2 nd grade	125	18.63	17-20	18.4	0.31
3 rd grade	98	14.61	18-22	19.6	0.49
4 th grade	102	15.20	19-24	20.5	0.53
5 th -6 th grade (master's degree)	119	17.73	21-42	29.8	4.47
Post-graduate students and teachers	96	14.31	23-42	34.0	4.22

emotional maturity, so the results of six subsamples were considered separately at the stage of analysis.

Diagnostic Tools

1) *Individual's Emotional Maturity Measurement Technique* (MDEZO) developed by [31] based on C. Rogers' human-centered approach. Emotional maturity is studied as an integrative quality that summarizes the psyche's emotional, cognitive, and regulatory components. It represents a certain level of development of the adult personality, characterized by openness to emotional experience, realizing one's own feelings and acceptance, developing emotional self-regulation, and expressing their inner states adequately to the situation.

The structure of emotional maturity is represented by five components: 1) *reflection of emotions* — sensitivity to internal experiences; realizing, understanding of one's own emotions and the reasons for their occurrence; ability to name emotions experienced in the present and in the past; awareness of emotions through bodily sensations; 2) *emotional self-regulation* — the ability to manage emotions according to the situation and appropriateness; experience emotions of different range, depth and intensity; evoke and maintain desired emotions and keep unwanted ones under control; cope with inappropriate, destructive emotions by socially acceptable means, mastering the techniques of stabilization and toning of the emotional state; 3) *empathy* — the ability to empathize, understand the emotional state of others, emotionally respond to their experiences; 4) *expressiveness* — the ability to naturally and spontaneously express emotions in facial expressions, movements, gestures, intonations; 5) *acceptance of one's own emotions* — the ability to accept one's positive and negative feelings as a natural manifestation of human nature, to come into contact with one's own experiences and to maintain emotions that are real. The questionnaire contains 65 questions with answer options from "definitely not" to "definitely yes" (corresponding scores from 1 to 4 points). The method has passed all the necessary procedures of psychometric verification, has a confirmed validity and reliability, established standardized test norms for male and female samples.

Since the set of qualities of reflection and self-regulation changes its characteristics over time, it makes sense to conduct regular monitoring of the level of emotional competencies. The survey results allowed

building group profiles and identifying the leading structural components of emotional maturity in each age group. Because different MDEZO scales contain different numbers of questions, raw scores were translated into % indicators ($100 \times \text{scale score} / \text{maximum possible scale score}$) for ease of comparison. The measuring instrument had sufficient reliability in our sample: the consistency coefficient, Cronbach's α , ranged from 0.73 to 0.88 for different scales. The integrated indicator of emotional maturity ranged from 46.9 to 92.7, $M=68.16$, $SD = 8.08$, $\alpha=0.85$.

Professional Burnout Questionnaire is a modification of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, adapted, validated, and standardized for Russian-speaking audiences [32]. The degree of burnout is measured by the severity of three key symptoms that are: *emotional exhaustion* is manifested in feelings of overexertion, devastation, depletion of their own resources; *depersonalization* is manifested in a cynical, critical, negative attitude towards recipients, colleagues, and other subjects of professional activity, mental distance from one's job; *reduction of personal achievements* is manifested in a negative attitude to the results of one's own work and loss of confidence in one's own professional competence, frustration due to lack of expected rewards (in the Technique, this symptom corresponds to the inverse scale of professional efficacy). MBI is the "gold standard" in burnout assessment, and the three-component Maslach-Jackson model formed the basis for defining this phenomenon in ICD-11 [1, 33]. The questionnaire consists of 22 statements about work-related experiences, which participants rated on a seven-point Likert scale from "never" (0 points) to "always, every day" (6 points). The Cronbach's α in our sample: 0.90 for the Emotional exhaustion scale, 0.81 for the Depersonalization scale, 0.84 for the Professional efficacy scale, indicates the high reliability of the measurement.

Procedure

The advantage of our study is the prolonged observation of the development of emotional competencies and manifestations of burnout in students and teachers during one academic year. The first survey was held in person, during in-class hours in the first week of the academic year (September 2019). The second slice was made in January 2020; participants filled in the survey forms on the last day of the winter examinations, after passing all intermediate exams. At this stage, we expected that the obtained

data show the psychological consequences of increasing the stress of students and teachers with sufficient psycho-emotional resources. The third final slice was scheduled for May-June 2020, which is the end of the academic year, which provided the highest possible stress on the background of depleted psycho-emotional resources of the individual. In Ukraine, as in many other countries, there were strict quarantine restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic during this period. Most employees and students of universities were in self-isolation, the educational process was remote. The participants were sent forms, which they filled out on their own.

Ethical Aspects

The study was conducted following the APA ethical principles and the Declaration of Helsinki. The participants learned the objectives and methods of the study, the conditions of storage and use of personal data in advance and gave their written consent. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and no material or organizational incentives were used to encourage participants. Surveying higher educational institutions did not require ethical verification and examination of psychodiagnostic tools in Ukraine.

Data Processing

Quantitative indicators of all diagnostic scales were verified for compliance with the normality test, for which

measures of asymmetry, excess, and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test were used. The normality of the distribution of the measured features in the sample allowed the use of parametric analysis methods. Descriptive statistics and response rates were calculated in six subsamples. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare mean values in groups of different ages and occupational statuses. Verification of dispersion homogeneity was performed using Levene's test, and posterior comparisons were performed using the Bonferroni correction. To determine the reliability of the data transfer at different stages of the training cycle, analysis of variance with repeated measurements (MANOVA, (General Linear Model) was applied. Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated to identify the relationships between emotional maturity and burnout in the three stages of the study. The calculations were performed in SPSS Statistics (Version 20) and Microsoft Excel 2016.

RESULTS

Dynamics of Burnout and Development of Emotional Competencies during the Annual Training Cycle

According to the study results, a significant shift in burnout values during the academic year was recorded. In addition to the time factor, the severity of changes is significantly influenced by a particular grade (Table 2).

Table 2: Shift of Burnout Values at the Beginning (I), in the Middle (II), and at the End (III) of the Academic Year

Burnout parameters:	1 st -grade students			MANOVA		2 nd -grade students			MANOVA	
	I	II	III	Pillai's Trace	Sig.	I	II	III	Pillai's Trace	Sig.
emotional exhaustion	16.84	17.21	18.07	0.230	0.000	16.81	17.22	17.87	0.075	0.006
depersonalization	7.84	7.75	7.71	0.033	0.117	7.74	7.93	7.93	0.021	0.271
personal efficacy	24.84	24.96	25.43	0.039	0.076	25.21	25.55	26.32	0.055	0.030
Burnout parameters:	3 rd -grade students			MANOVA		4 th -grade students			MANOVA	
	I	II	III	Pillai's Trace	Sig.	I	II	III	Pillai's Trace	Sig.
emotional exhaustion	18.47	20.24	20.80	0.324	0.000	21.59	23.29	26.30	0.456	0.000
depersonalization	7.51	8.06	8.17	0.064	0.044	10.46	11.08	12.14	0.418	0.000
personal efficacy:	25.34	26.60	27.33	0.280	0.000	25.54	26.17	28.75	0.309	0.000
Burnout parameters:	Master's degree (5 th -6 th grade)			MANOVA		Post-graduate students and teachers			MANOVA	
	I	II	III	Pillai's Trace	Sig.	I	II	III	Pillai's Trace	Sig.
emotional exhaustion	20.63	22.97	25.86	0.440	0.000	20.89	21.42	25.53	0.511	0.000
depersonalization	10.08	10.64	11.05	0.218	0.000	9.34	9.33	11.01	0.409	0.000
personal efficacy	25.58	26.19	28.72	0.287	0.000	33.96	34.24	34.41	0.053	0.074

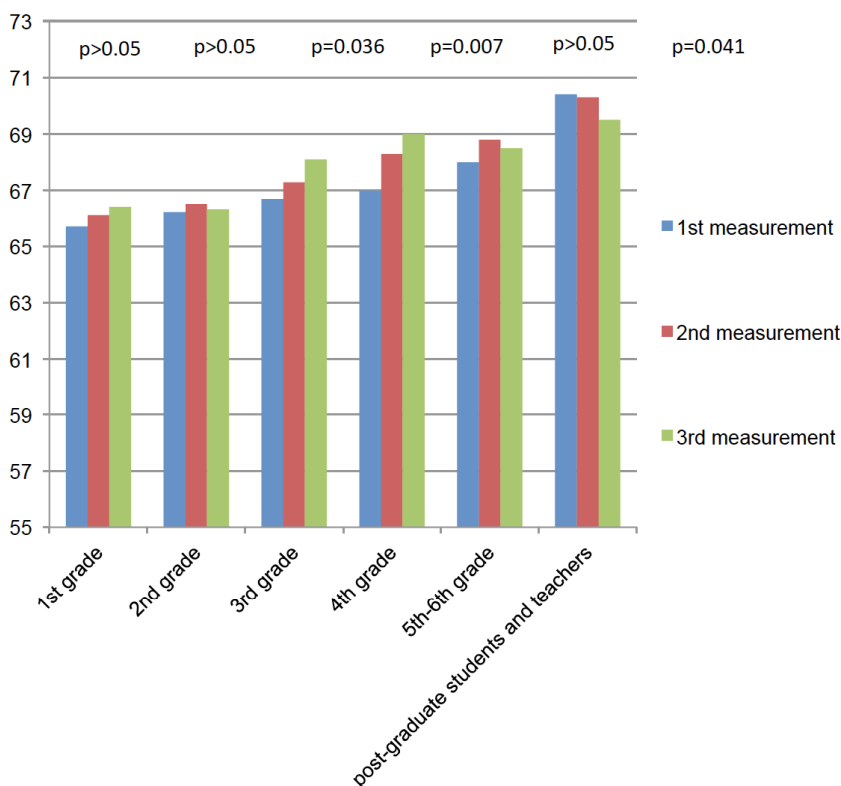


Figure 1: An integral indicator of emotional maturity in groups during the training cycle.

During the examination periods, the average level of emotional exhaustion inevitably increased for both students and university staff. The fatigue accumulation effect was observed in all groups without exception but was particularly strong in teachers and graduate students. Starting from the third year of study, we observe a gradual increase in the level of depersonalization; the highest rates are observed in the fourth, final year. At the same time, throughout the training (with each passed series of examinations), the students grew a sense of professional self-efficacy, which is a natural compensation for the effort expended. This increase is relatively small in junior grades, while graduates, bachelors, and masters had the maximum level. Teachers' efficacy rate remained consistently high during the year and did not change significantly.

The parameters of students' emotional competencies showed an uneven and unstable increase, which did not reach a statistically significant level. The accumulation of these indistinct changes is reflected in the dynamics of the integrated indicator of emotional maturity (Figure 1).

The obtained data draw attention to the cases of reverse dynamics — in some groups, the rate of emotional maturity decreased at the end of the year.

This is especially noticeable in the group of teachers (Figure 1). This result is unexpected but can be explained by a sharp decline in emotional self-control and self-regulation due to stress at the start of the 2020 pandemic. This is consistent with a corresponding decrease in the sense of professional self-efficacy in the adult group but not in students' groups (Table 2).

Age Dynamics of the Development of Emotional Maturity: Comparative Analysis of Groups

Let us consider the mean values of emotional maturity in the subsamples (Table 3). The mean values of the two measurements were the material for the analysis: at the beginning of the year and after the winter examinations when stress level was uncritical, and resource potential was high enough (the indicators of the third stage were not taken into account due to extraordinary testing conditions).

Calculations showed that the general level and structure of emotional maturity changed significantly during university studies and maturation. The trends demonstrate the priorities for the development of emotional competencies of different age groups.

We can see that expressiveness, which was the main emotionality component in the 1st year, further

Table 3: Comparison of Mean Values of Emotional Competencies in the Subsamples of Students and Teachers

	1 st grade	2 nd grade	3 rd grade	4 th grade	5 th -6 th grade	Post-graduate students and teachers	ANOVA comparative analysis		
							Levene's Test, Sig.	F	Sig.
An integral indicator of emotional maturity	65.97	66.33	66.94	67.63	68.44	70.32	0.321	4.32	0.001
Reflection of emotions	65.85	65.46	67.78	68.93	68.47	69.77	0.522	2.68	0.021
Emotional self-regulation	65.47	66.50	66.95	67.88	69.15	72.04	0.458	6.04	0.000
Empathy	66.89	67.12	67.40	68.24	69.51	72.36	0.583	2.89	0.014
Emotional expressiveness	67.31	67.24	66.82	67.55	67.63	68.18	0.358	0.32	0.902
Acceptance of one's own emotions	64.80	65.66	66.14	66.06	67.42	69.45	0.416	2.64	0.023

increases very slightly (compared to other variables) and eventually becomes the least pronounced component. Instead, empathy and self-regulation are growing steadily and consistently; after graduation, they become the leading signs of emotional maturity of adult women. Acceptance of one's own emotions develops rather slowly in adolescence, lagging behind other structural components. It should be noted that some abilities develop unevenly during the student period: the reflection of emotions shows peak values in the 4th year after a pronounced "failure" in the 2nd year.

Regarding the age dynamics of burnout, the comparative analysis showed a gradual increase in symptoms of emotional exhaustion during university studies, which reaches a maximum in the final years. The trend of depersonalization is nonlinear, with a peak in the fourth, last year of bachelor studies. The average self-efficacy rate was the highest in the adult occupational group (which is to be expected); it increased by an average of three points during training (Table 4).

In general, in 4th-6th grades, when bachelors and masters passed their state qualifying exams, almost half of the respondents had severe symptoms of burnout on one or two indicators (244 people or 42.4%

of the student sample). At the same time, evident signs of reduction of personal achievements were extremely rare — only seven cases among 575 surveyed students (1.2%), all recorded in the junior years.

The number of "burned out" people among teachers was about a third of the sample. The prevalence of symptoms was different in different universities — in one institution, burnout was diagnosed in only 12.5% of respondents, in another — in 43.4%. The latter case indicates an over-intensive mode of work and imbalance of resource provision due to imperfect organizational conditions.

The Correlation between Emotional Competencies and Burnout

According to the comparative analysis, the masters turned out to be an intermediate group with both the student and adult (professional) population characteristics. Almost 40% of this group are adults with a second higher education, usually working conquer with studying. In view of this, for further analysis, the sample was divided into two large subsamples: a) *working people*, including those who combined work and study (teachers, graduate students, and some masters, a total of 126 people), b)

Table 4: Comparison of Mean Values of Depletion in Subsamples of Students and Teachers

	1 st grade	2 nd grade	3 rd grade	4 th grade	5 th -6 th grade	Post-graduate students and teachers	ANOVA comparative analysis		
							Levene's Test, Sig	F	Sig.
Emotional exhaustion	18.34	19.55	20.04	23.28	23.04	22.59	0.473	9.29	0.000
Depersonalization	7.71	7.73	7.99	11.18	9.93	9.88	0.366	3.63	0.003
Personal efficacy	25.03	25.44	26.65	27.69	28.15	34.20	0.133	15.56	0.000

Table 5: Correlations of Indicators of Emotional Maturity with Burnout Symptoms at Different Stages of the Educational Cycle (Employees, 126 People)

Indicators and stages of the study		Emotional exhaustion	Depersonalization	Professional efficacy
An integral indicator of emotional maturity	Measurement I	-0.187*	0.036	0.258**
	Measurement II	-0.205*	0.038	0.267**
	Measurement III	-0.238*	-0.026	0.301***
Reflection of emotions	Measurement I	-0.114	-0.058	0.144
	Measurement II	-0.106	-0.045	0.151
	Measurement III	-0.168	-0.107	0.179*
Emotional self-regulation	Measurement I	-0.213**	0.093	0.239**
	Measurement II	-0.258**	0.103	0.241**
	Measurement III	-0.306***	0.041	0.288***
Empathy	Measurement I	-0.106	-0.181*	0.211*
	Measurement II	-0.099	-0.180*	0.225**
	Measurement III	-0.144	-0.192*	0.242**
Emotional expressiveness	Measurement I	-0.153	0.016	0.184*
	Measurement II	-0.168	-0.025	0.177*
	Measurement III	-0.177*	-0.033	0.177*
Acceptance of one's own emotions	Measurement I	-0.170	0.145	0.182*
	Measurement II	-0.184*	0.176*	0.188*
	Measurement III	-0.204*	0.173*	0.196*

Note: * p≤0.05, ** p≤0.01, *** p≤0.001.

1st-6th grade students, whose main activity is studying only (545 people).

The study found numerous correlations between burnout and emotional competencies, but the correlation structure is slightly different in different groups. Reflection and self-regulation of emotions made the most significant contribution to preventing burnout in students, while in employees, these were self-regulation, empathy, and acceptance of their own feelings (Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5 shows that the negative correlation of the structural components of emotional maturity with the burnout symptoms is exacerbated in stressful situations of professional activity and becomes particularly strong during the general social crisis (Measurements II and III). The same pattern is found in relation to self-assessment of professional efficacy — the correlations with emotional competencies become more robust in the stressful periods of the educational cycle.

The correlation of depersonalization with the components of EI has a complex structure: empathy is negatively correlated with the severity of this symptom (which is quite expected and understandable), while

the acceptance of one's own emotions shows significant positive correlations (this connection can be explained by the fact that those who accept their own negative states more openly acknowledge the manifestations of cynicism, criticism of other subjects of work and speak more sincerely in the survey). Divergent forces explain the lack of significant correlations regarding the integral indicator of emotional maturity.

In the sample of students, the rate of depersonalization was negatively correlated with all emotional competencies, most strongly with manifestations of empathy, reflection, and self-regulation.

These connections also show a tendency to increase during examination periods. In the case of assessments of emotional expressiveness and acceptance of one's own emotions, we observe an increase in correlations to a statistically significant level (Table 6).

Thus, the correlation structure of emotional competencies with the manifestations of burnout has

Table 6: Correlations of Indicators of Emotional Maturity with Burnout Symptoms at Different Stages of the Educational Cycle (Students, 545 People)

Indicators and stages of the study		Emotional exhaustion	Depersonalization	Professional efficacy
An integral indicator of emotional maturity	Measurement I	-0.134**	-0.094*	0.117**
	Measurement II	-0.128**	-0.095*	0.111*
	Measurement III	-0.140**	-0.109*	0.109*
Reflection of emotions	Measurement I	-0.136**	-0.084	0.110*
	Measurement II	-0.114*	-0.088*	0.097*
	Measurement III	-0.120**	-0.113**	0.096*
Emotional self-regulation	Measurement I	-0.166***	-0.089*	0.118*
	Measurement II	-0.165***	-0.091*	0.121**
	Measurement III	-0.171***	-0.106*	0.123**
Empathy	Measurement I	-0.091*	-0.105*	0.087*
	Measurement II	-0.082	-0.094*	0.069
	Measurement III	-0.096*	-0.090*	0.056
Emotional expressiveness	Measurement I	-0.077	-0.034	0.081
	Measurement II	-0.081	-0.056	0.090*
	Measurement III	-0.090*	-0.056	0.074
Acceptance of one's own emotions	Measurement I	-0.068	-0.066	0.078
	Measurement II	-0.070	-0.053	0.084
	Measurement III	-0.085*	-0.071	0.085*

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$.

age and occupational specifics and depends on external stressors.

DISCUSSION

The severity of burnout symptoms corresponds to the general dynamics of the workload of respondents — it gradually increases during the examination periods in the middle and at the end of the year. This result is quite expected; it confirms the well-established view that organizational conditions play a leading role in the occurrence and prevention of burnout [4, 34]. But the undeniable influence of external conditions is mediated by personal factors, including age and professional status of respondents.

In the first years of professional training, burnout is manifested mainly in the feeling of fatigue and exhaustion and does not affect other symptoms. The third grade differs somewhat in terms of the dynamics: a sharp leap in depletion in the middle of the year and relative stability in the spring may be due to the difficulties of a particular session and learning conditions. Starting from the fourth year, the manifestations of depersonalization increase: at this

time, many students begin to feel some frustration in the chosen profession. This phenomenon is described in the scientific literature as a normative crisis of professional readiness [35]. Graduation students have extremely severe burnout symptoms at the end of the year; at this time, information overload and limited work time are complicated by the responsibility for the results of exams.

It is important to note that adverse manifestations (increased manifestations of exhaustion and depersonalization) are accompanied by a positive trend — a growing feeling of professional efficacy — in all student groups. Thus, along with fatigue and cynicism, the experience of successful fulfillment of professional and educational tasks is accumulated. As a result, professional identity successfully forms, the self-esteem of one's own competence grows. This trend is especially noticeable in senior grades.

At the end of the year, the manifestations of exhaustion and depersonalization also significantly increase in teachers. But unlike students, this sample did not show an increase in professional efficacy that could offset the input of personal resources.

Similar statistics have not been published before, so we cannot compare the data with previous studies. A recent survey of Ukrainian students [36] showed that 40% felt constant fatigue and unwillingness to learn, noted depression due to difficulties, and needed additional motivation, but the prevalence of burnout strongly depended on the grade and specialty. This partially supports our results.

The identified dynamics also reflect the impact of self-isolation on the emotional sphere of students and teachers. This was not planned in the study but is undoubtedly valuable information. The burnout problem was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Distance learning in quarantine was accompanied by a significant increase in the manifestations of emotional exhaustion in most respondents and a decrease in the sense of professional efficacy in the group of teachers. The obtained result partially contradicts the traditional notion that a large number and proximity of social contacts is a source of professional stress in teaching. Distance learning has made the interaction of the participants less intense. At the same time, teachers' workload increased sharply, and they had to learn to work in new conditions quickly. Most were not ready morally and technically to do so. Additional burnout determinants included violations of the usual rules and limits of communication, overtime work, pandemic-related feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, and fears. On the other hand, stress during the first wave of quarantine in the spring of 2020 mobilized physical and mental resources, which affected the dynamics of student performance. The best adapted in this situation were 3rd and 4th-year students who demonstrated a significant development of the components of emotional maturity.

Because we expected an exacerbation of burnout symptoms caused by habitual fatigue and "exhaustion" at the end of the school year when planning the study, the magnitude of this effect remains unknown. A repeated survey without force majeure is required to determine that.

Analysis of the age dynamics of the development of emotional maturity showed that different emotional competencies develop unevenly and simultaneously at different speeds in different sensitive periods. The emotional expressiveness of girls reaches the peak of expression at the beginning of adulthood — at 16-18. Later, the ability to spontaneously and consciously express feelings in facial expressions, pantomime, movements, gestures, intonation changes little. The

third or fourth year of study (18-21 years) is a sensitive period for the development of emotional reflection.

The last, 4th year of the bachelor's degree can be considered a crisis because the rate of reflection is the highest, and the acceptance of emotions is the lowest. Thus, a woman learns to listen to her own feelings but does not yet accept them as appropriate and natural reactions. Acceptance of one's own emotions develops slowly at a young age, lagging behind other structural components of emotional maturity. "The courage to come into contact with their own experiences" [31] requires appropriate work on oneself and the accumulation of life experience. From the standpoint of humanistic psychology, this is the highest ability that testifies to true personal maturity, which all adults do not reach.

It is known that a low level of emotional maturity is accompanied by intense feelings of negative emotions (grief, anger, resentment, fear, shame), high anxiety, guilt, the severity of aggressive and hostile reactions, the tendency to negative self-esteem and self-aggression, immaturity and imperfection of the psychological protection mechanisms. Emotionally immature people are characterized by the phenomenon of "sticking" of emotions — the inability to identify and realize independent experience: the activation of one negative emotion leads to a complex of interrelated sthenic and asthenic experiences. In previous studies, students aged 20-23 were interviewed through MDEZ, and gender differences in the development of emotional competencies were identified. Expressiveness, empathy, and acceptance of their own emotions dominated in women, while emotional reflection and self-regulation dominated in men [31]. Studying the development of emotionality in adolescence, [14] found that the general level of emotional maturity has no gender differences, but people of different genders choose different ways to achieve "adequacy of emotional response": self-regulation in men, expressiveness, and empathy in women. This allows expanding the view and presents the results in the general context of age and gender patterns of development of the emotional sphere.

Changes in the structure of emotional competencies describe the adaptive potential of a certain age period and reflect women's emotional maturity achievements.

Several previous studies confirmed a vital role of EI in burnout prevention. A systemic review of teacher burnout research suggests that emotional

competencies help effectively overcome stress in the workplace and prevent frustration and professional unfulfillment [37]. First of all, emotional abilities are a predictor of professional efficiency in activities related to the emergence and settlement of emotional situations. The identified correlations confirm previously known data on the protective function of emotional intelligence in combating burnout and specify this effect depending on age and professional status.

In *adults* (graduate students of psychological and pedagogical specialties, university professors, and people receiving a second higher education combining with the job), emotional abilities primarily determine the development of a sense of professional competence and self-efficacy. The ability to self-regulate and control emotions is the strongest factor that counteracts emotional exhaustion due to stress accumulation. This connection is strengthened during stressful periods, and the influence of "secondary" emotional competencies — expressiveness and reflexivity — becomes more noticeable. For example, emotional expressiveness does not particularly affect the manifestations of burnout in everyday life, but in stressful situations provides the necessary emotional discharge, spontaneous relief.

The ability to accept one's own emotions plays an ambiguous role in the manifestations of burnout — it protects against emotional exhaustion, promotes professional efficacy while having positive correlations with the manifestations of cynicism. This component of emotional maturity is formed in ontogenesis later than all others and is a sign of a psychologically harmonious, integrated personality.

In the sample of students, the ability to realize and regulate one's own experiences makes the most significant contribution to preventing burnout, thus ensuring the prevention of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. The feeling of self-efficacy in this period has a different set of predictors: empathy, expressiveness, and acceptance of one's own emotions are positively correlated with assessments of professional achievements of students, but not adult specialists. It should be noted that the formation and maturation of most emotional competencies (except for expressiveness) continues in this age period, so it should be expected that the internal mechanisms of emotional self-defense also undergo the necessary age transformations.

In all samples throughout the educational cycle, *emotional self-regulation* (the ability to manage one's

emotions according to the situation and appropriateness, to cope with them in socially acceptable ways) is closely related to self-esteem and exhaustion, and *empathy* (empathy for another person's emotional state a sense of the external origin of this experience) is a reliable predictor of the absence of cynicism about their own work and its recipients. This can be explained by the specifics of the profession — for psychologists and teachers, and it is important to be able to control their own feelings and emotional states of others. It is no coincidence that EI is considered a key factor contributing to the professional success and psychological well-being of teachers [37].

A large-scale study of teachers [27] showed that EI reduces the level of work stress that causes burnout, while work experience, position, education, and personal traits of the Big Five do not have such an effect. [38] noted that teachers who are not prone to burnout differ in the regulatory capabilities of the mature person. This allows finding conflict-free and constructive ways to interact with the professional environment; the combination of emotional sensitivity and, at the same time, selectivity in contacts, provides the optimal level of "energy functioning, exchange with the environment", which does not exceed the capabilities of the subject and does not cause exhaustion. A study by [20] showed that emotional regulation is the strongest factor in protecting teachers from burnout; interpersonal EI indicators had the least impact: "identifying emotions of others", "social relations," and "using emotional knowledge". Our data confirm the exceptional importance of self-regulation. This correlation is especially important because teachers' burnout affects not only their own health and well-being but also the quality of the educational process, as a result — the achievement, motivation, and well-being of their students [39].

Increasing correlations during examination sessions and at the beginning of quarantine in 2020 confirms the hypothesis that the protective effect of emotional intelligence on the likelihood of burnout is especially evident with increasing workload and stressful living conditions. All this supports the idea of EI as a set of adaptive abilities that contribute to the productive fulfillment of professional tasks and "to successfully cope with daily demands, challenges, and pressures" [8]. But it is possible that the interpretation of the obtained correlations may be different. It seems quite logical that a "burned out" person loses emotional skills: exhaustion blocks the manifestations of expressiveness and empathy, impairs the ability to

reflect and self-regulate feelings, and so on. This assumption is partially confirmed by the obtained empirical data on reducing the emotional maturity of some groups in stressful conditions.

According to the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory [40, 41], the key moment of burnout is the ratio of losses and gains of resources: internal (professional skills, self-regulation skills, self-esteem, resilience, etc.), external (social and organizational support), object (physical, material), energy, etc. Burnout is seen as a time-stretched stress syndrome, where a person spends resources without receiving a decent reward (salary, respect, gratitude from recipients, etc.) in return. People try to overcome stress in the early stages by intensively investing personal resources: time, energy, information retrieval, and other efforts to solve the problem. In a resource shortage, protective behavior aimed at reducing losses, maintaining or replenishing available resources is inevitable.

In the event of a resource shortage, *protective behavior* aimed at reducing losses, maintaining or replenishing available resources is inevitable. Thus, the loss of emotional abilities in a burnout situation can be considered a spontaneous defense mechanism that saves psycho-energy resources. In the context of COR Theory, the acquisition of professional competencies (academic success and a sense of self-efficacy) is a sufficient reward that compensates for resource input in student samples. The causal role of the individual components of EI in burnout prevention should be the subject of subsequent experimental studies.

In any case, the development of emotional competencies is the most natural and effective way to overcome burnout. This practice has a long history, developed methodology, and proven effectiveness [42, 43]. This work should be started as early as possible, preferably in sensitive periods of developing certain emotional competencies in adolescents and youth. Organizations interested in the psychological well-being, long-term efficacy, and effectiveness of their employees should arrange training to improve the skills of emotional self-regulation, reflection, empathy, expression, and other skills in accordance with a professional specialization. On the other hand, individual psychological care aims to develop the ability to understand and accept their own emotional experiences as important and informative internal signals, which is not always appropriate in an organizational context.

CONCLUSIONS

Emotional intelligence affects the manifestations of burnout both directly — through the prevention of emotional exhaustion and indirectly — through the sense of personal and professional self-efficacy. The protective effect of emotional intelligence on the likelihood of burnout is especially evident with increasing workload and in stressful living conditions.

EI as a way to overcome work stress and prevent burnout is based on a number of emotional competencies. Understanding one's emotions give a person a clear and understandable signal about the danger of stress accumulation and its negative consequences. Acceptance of own emotions allows understanding normality and temporality of negative states that promotes a feeling of control. The ability of emotional regulation provides timely neutralization of negative emotions as a source of stress and the choice of effective ways to recover. Developed empathy provides social support and resource exchange. Emotional expression helps express one's feelings and relieve tension in a difficult situation in the most appropriate way. All these abilities are actualized in stressful situations, contributing to the effective completion of job assignments and overcoming difficulties.

These competencies are gradually formed in ontogenesis, which is facilitated by the experience of social interaction in emotionally saturated situations and purposeful learning. The structure of emotional abilities determines the level of psychological and social maturity of the individual. A specific set of competencies that provide adequate emotional response varies in view of gender, age, the professional orientation of the individual. This should be taken into account in psycho-correctional and developmental work.

LIMITATION

Manifestations of emotionality in women and men have significant differences due to several biological and social factors. Therefore, the obtained results are limited to purely female populations of the appropriate age and educational level.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The research team is sincerely grateful to the participants for their productive work and the personal information provided.

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Received on 10-04-2021

Accepted on 21-05-2021

Published on 01-06-2021

<https://doi.org/10.6000/2292-2598.2021.09.03.4>