

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION LECTURERS IN MODERN EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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Summary

In the course of their research, the authors analysed academic approaches to interpreting the definition of ‘emotional intelligence’ and explored its essence and role in the professional practice of higher education lecturers. It is noted that contemporary transformational processes in higher education – linked to the digitalisation of the educational environment, the internationalisation of education, the spread of distance learning, and the increasing psycho-emotional strain on academic and teaching staff – highlight the importance of developing emotional intelligence as a key component of a lecturer’s professional competence. The relevance of the study stems from the need to foster in lecturers the ability to engage in effective emotional self-regulation, constructive interpersonal interaction, the prevention of professional burnout, and the creation of a psychologically comfortable educational environment. This paper summarises domestic and international research on emotional intelligence and analyses contemporary approaches to its development within the system of professional training and continuing professional development for lecturers at higher education institutions. It has been established that emotional intelligence is an integrative personality trait that combines the ability to recognise, understand and regulate one’s own emotions, recognise the emotional states of others, and develop empathy and effective communication. It has been demonstrated that a high level of emotional intelligence has a positive impact on the quality of teaching, professional resilience, adaptability to change and the effectiveness of interaction with all participants in the educational process.

Key words: emotional intelligence; teacher qualities; educational process; higher education institution; emotions; professional development.

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1. Introduction

The current stage of development in higher education is characterised by profound transformational processes driven by the digitalisation of the educational environment, the internationalisation of the educational landscape, the spread of distance and blended learning, and the need to adapt to today’s social, economic and security challenges. Under these circumstances, the issue of professional development for lecturers at higher education institutions takes on particular relevance, involving not only the enhancement of

subject-specific and professional competences but also the development of a range of social and emotional qualities necessary for effective pedagogical interaction. One of the key characteristics of a modern lecturer is emotional intelligence, which is increasingly regarded as a crucial factor in professional success, psychological well-being and the quality of the educational process.

In contemporary academic discourse, emotional intelligence is defined as an individual's ability to recognise, understand, interpret and regulate their own emotions, as well as to recognise the emotional states of others and constructively build interpersonal relationships. Foreign and domestic researchers, including J. Mayer, P. Salovey, D. Goleman, R. Bar-On, S. Derevianko, O. Ichanska, A. Zakrevska and others, have made significant contributions to the development of the theory of emotional intelligence. Their research demonstrates that emotional intelligence is a vital resource for personal development, effective communication, decision-making and coping with stressful situations.

The issue of developing emotional intelligence takes on particular significance in the professional practice of higher education lecturers. The modern paradigm of humanisation and student-centred education involves building a partnership between the lecturer and the student, creating a psychologically safe learning environment, supporting individual learning pathways and fostering students' personal development. Achieving these objectives is impossible without the teacher's ability to effectively manage their own emotional reactions, demonstrate empathy, maintain students' motivation and resolve conflict situations constructively.

In today's rapidly changing society, teachers are constantly faced with new challenges linked to a heavy workload, the need to master innovative teaching technologies, work in a digital environment and ensure the quality of the educational process in conditions of uncertainty. At the same time, it is emotional intelligence that acts as a key mechanism for adapting to change, fostering psychological resilience, professional resilience and preventing emotional burnout. Research shows that teachers with high levels of emotional intelligence demonstrate better indicators of professional effectiveness, an ability to communicate constructively and a higher level of job satisfaction.

The relevance of this research is further heightened by the growing importance of emotional intelligence in ensuring the quality of education. A positive psychological climate within a higher education institution, effective interaction between all participants in the educational process, the development of academic culture, and the maintenance of students' motivation depend to a large extent on the level of development of lecturers' social and emotional competences. In this context, emotional intelligence is increasingly recognised as a critically important skill for professional communication, collaboration, leadership and ethical interaction within the educational environment.

2. Theoretical foundations of research into the emotional intelligence of higher education lecturers

An analysis of current academic research indicates that Ukrainian scholars primarily focus on issues relating to the practical development of emotional intelligence among teachers, students, childcare workers and other participants in the educational process (*Hrytsenko, 2019; Stasiuk, Vainilovych, Kobchenko, 2024*). At the same time, international researchers are actively exploring innovative models for assessing emotional intelligence, as well as opportunities for its development through digital technologies, coaching practices, professional development programmes and institutional support for teaching staff. This diversity in research directions

highlights the need for a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical and practical aspects of developing emotional intelligence among higher education lecturers in the context of contemporary educational transformations.

An analysis of current academic literature indicates a significant broadening of the concept of 'emotional intelligence' in psychological and pedagogical science. Whereas it was previously associated primarily with a person's ability to recognise their own emotions and the emotional states of others, emotional intelligence is now regarded as a complex, integrative aspect of personality that combines emotional, cognitive, motivational and regulatory components. In contemporary scientific discourse, it is interpreted as a key mechanism for ensuring effective self-regulation, interpersonal interaction and personal development.

Emotional intelligence encompasses the ability to recognise, analyse and interpret emotional experiences, to utilise emotional information in the process of thinking and decision-making, and to regulate one's own behavioural responses in accordance with social norms, professional requirements and value orientations (*Stasiuk, Vainilovych, Kobchenko, 2024*). This approach allows us to view emotional intelligence as an important psychological resource that ensures an individual's successful adaptation to the dynamic conditions of modern society, helps to maintain emotional balance, develop resilience and foster constructive social relationships.

Emotional intelligence takes on particular significance in the context of constant change and professional challenges characteristic of the modern educational environment. Individuals with a high level of emotional intelligence demonstrate greater flexibility in responding to complex situations, cope more effectively with stressors and adapt more quickly to new working conditions. Furthermore, well-developed skills in emotional self-regulation, empathy and reflection foster openness to innovation, a readiness for creative exploration, continuous professional development and the realisation of personal potential.

The author of the study asserts that 'emotional intelligence is an integral component of teachers' professional competence, which determines the success of social communication in the modern educational environment. It contributes to the creation of a supportive learning environment, enhances the effectiveness of teaching practice, and fosters the development of both teachers and students' (*Morhun, 2025*).

Researchers Maamari, B. and Salloum, Y. note that a high level of EI among teachers correlates with reduced professional burnout, increased job satisfaction and the development of a supportive style of pedagogical interaction (*Maamari, B. E., Salloum, Y., 2023*).

The results of numerous international empirical studies confirm the existence of a statistically significant positive correlation between the level of emotional intelligence and an individual's creativity. Researchers emphasise that the ability to recognise, understand and effectively regulate emotional states creates favourable conditions for stimulating creative processes, generating new ideas and finding unconventional ways of solving professional challenges. Emotionally mature individuals demonstrate a greater ability to constructively utilise emotional experience as a resource for cognitive activity, which has a positive impact on innovative thinking, adaptability and productivity.

3.The challenges of the modern educational environment and their impact on a teacher's professional practice

Based on an analysis of current academic research, it is worth identifying the key challenges that have the greatest impact on the work of higher education lecturers:

1. The digitalisation of the educational process. The rapid development of information and communication technologies requires lecturers to constantly update their digital skills and familiarise themselves with new educational platforms and services. The need to adapt quickly to technological changes is often accompanied by increased psychological stress. In such circumstances, emotional intelligence helps lecturers to manage their own emotional reactions effectively, maintain motivation for professional development and preserve their psychological balance.

2. The rise of distance and blended learning. One of the most significant challenges in recent years has been the introduction of distance learning. The lack of direct contact between those involved in the educational process complicates communication, reduces students' emotional engagement and creates risks of interaction becoming overly formal. In such circumstances, lecturers must make additional efforts to maintain emotional contact with learners, using personalised feedback, empathetic communication strategies and digital tools to support learning motivation.

3. Increased psychological and emotional strain and the risk of professional burnout. The modern professional role of a teacher involves a significant amount of teaching, research, organisational and administrative work. Juggling numerous professional responsibilities often leads to emotional exhaustion, chronic stress and professional burnout. Well-developed emotional intelligence is a key factor in preventing these negative phenomena, helping to foster skills in self-regulation, emotional stability and psychological resilience.

4. Complexities in interpersonal communication and conflict situations. The educational process involves constant interaction between lecturers, students, the administration and colleagues. Under conditions of high workload and diverse social expectations, conflict situations arise that require constructive resolution. Research shows that lecturers with a high level of emotional intelligence are more effective at applying strategies of cooperation, dialogue and compromise. The ability to listen to the other person, demonstrate empathy and maintain professional objectivity helps to build trust and foster a positive psychological climate.

5. The internationalisation of the educational landscape. Today's lecturers are increasingly involved in international educational and research projects, academic mobility and intercultural communication. Working in a multicultural environment requires tolerance, openness to diversity, the ability to understand the cultural characteristics of partners, and the capacity to interact effectively with representatives of different socio-cultural groups. Emotional intelligence is a key factor in successful intercultural communication and professional adaptation.

6. Uncertainty and the crisis challenges of modern society. Pandemics, socio-economic changes, military conflicts and other crises have a significant impact on the functioning of the education system. Teachers are forced to work in conditions of uncertainty, adapt quickly to new circumstances and, at the same time, support their students. In such conditions, skills such as emotional self-regulation, psychological resilience and the ability to maintain professional effectiveness even in the face of significant stressors take on particular importance.

To summarise the above, the modern educational environment demands not only a high level of professional competence from teachers, but also the need to develop emotional intelligence as a vital resource for successful teaching. It is emotional intelligence that enables teachers to respond effectively to today's challenges, maintain the quality of the educational process and contribute to the creation of a supportive psychological climate in higher education institutions.

4. Educational conditions for the development of emotional intelligence among lecturers at higher education institutions

Based on an analysis of academic sources, current trends in the development of higher education and pedagogical experience, it is appropriate to identify the following pedagogical conditions for the development of emotional intelligence among lecturers at higher education institutions (*Maamari, Salloum, 2023; Bondarenko, 2021; Morhun, 2025*):

1. Creating an emotionally safe and supportive educational and professional environment. The effective development of emotional intelligence is possible provided that an atmosphere of trust, mutual respect, open communication and psychological safety is fostered within the higher education institution. Such an environment fosters the development of empathy, emotional openness, interpersonal skills and the constructive resolution of professional conflicts. An important factor is support from the administration and colleagues, which ensures a positive socio-psychological climate and provides opportunities for lecturers' professional self-expression.

2. Organisation of targeted psychological and pedagogical training aimed at developing emotional intelligence. The development of emotional intelligence requires systematic and scientifically grounded work, which involves incorporating into professional development programmes specialised training sessions, seminars, workshops and practical sessions on emotional self-regulation, the development of empathy, communicative competence and the prevention of professional burnout. Such approaches help teachers to become aware of their own emotional resources and to develop skills for effectively managing their emotions in their professional practice.

3. Engaging teachers in reflective and practice-oriented activities. A key prerequisite for the development of emotional intelligence is the systematic reflection on professional experience, the analysis of teaching situations and the assessment of one's own emotional reactions. The use of case studies, supervision, group discussions, coaching techniques and methods of pedagogical reflection contributes to the development of emotional awareness, self-control and the ability to interact constructively with learners and colleagues.

4. The use of digital and innovative technologies to develop emotional competence. In the current context of the digitalisation of education, the use of online training courses, interactive platforms, digital simulators of communicative situations, artificial intelligence technologies and other innovative tools aimed at developing teachers' emotional competence is becoming increasingly important. Their use enables the simulation of complex professional situations, the refinement of skills in emotional self-regulation and interpersonal communication, and an increased readiness to work effectively within the modern educational environment.

The implementation of these pedagogical conditions ensures the comprehensive development of emotional intelligence among higher education lecturers, contributes to improving the quality of teaching, professional resilience and the effectiveness of interaction with all participants in the educational process.

5. Conclusions

The results of the study showed that, against the backdrop of the transformation of modern higher education, emotional intelligence is emerging as one of the key professionally significant characteristics of a lecturer at a higher education institution. It has been established that the contemporary interpretation of emotional intelligence goes beyond its traditional

understanding as the ability to recognise and regulate emotions, and views it as an integrative personal construct that combines emotional, cognitive, motivational and behavioural components. It is the interaction of these components that ensures a lecturer's effective professional performance, their capacity for constructive communication, self-regulation, adaptation to change and productive pedagogical interaction. It has been established that the modern educational environment is characterised by a number of challenges, including the digitalisation of the educational process, the spread of distance and blended learning, an increase in psychological and emotional strain, the risks of professional burnout, the need for individualised learning, the intensification of intercultural interaction, and operating in conditions of social instability. Under such circumstances, emotional intelligence serves as a vital resource for professional resilience, psychological well-being and the improvement of the quality of educational practice. An analysis of domestic and international experience has shown that the development of emotional intelligence requires targeted and systematic pedagogical support. It has been established that the most effective pedagogical conditions for its development are the creation of an emotionally safe educational environment, the organisation of specialised psychological and pedagogical training for teachers, the encouragement of reflective practice, and the use of modern digital and training technologies.

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