

THE IMPACT OF THE LEVEL OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE CONSTRUCTIVE RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS

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Abstract: This article provides a scientific and psychological analysis of the influence of the level of emotional intelligence in young people on the process of constructive conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships. Emotional intelligence is interpreted as an individual's ability to understand and manage their own emotions, correctly perceive the emotional states of others, and establish effective communication in relationships. The article highlights the causes of conflict situations, the socio-psychological characteristics of conflicts occurring among young people, and the role of emotional intelligence in resolving conflicts in a non-violent manner based on communication and mutual consideration of interests. In addition, the influence of the main components of emotional intelligence—self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, social skills, and internal motivation—on constructive conflict resolution is substantiated. The findings show that the development of emotional intelligence in young people is an important factor in reducing the number and intensity of conflicts, strengthening mutual understanding, creating a healthy psychological environment within groups, and ensuring both personal and social stability.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, youth psychology, conflict, constructive resolution, empathy.

Introduction

In the context of the development of modern society, the social activity of young people, their interpersonal relationships, and their participation in collective life are steadily increasing. Educational institutions, family, peer groups, social networks, and various social communities have become important components of young people's lives. In such a multifaceted system of relationships, the diversity of opinions, interests, needs, and values naturally gives rise to various contradictions and conflicts. Conflict is an inseparable part of human life and should not always be regarded solely as a negative phenomenon; when managed properly, it can also serve as a process that promotes development, understanding, and the improvement of relationships. From this perspective, the study of young people's attitudes toward conflict situations and the ways they resolve them is of considerable scientific and practical importance. Today, one of the key psychological factors determining the effectiveness of conflict resolution is emotional intelligence. This issue deserves particular attention because individuals enter conflict not only with their rational positions,

but also with their emotions, inner experiences, emotional reactions, and their ability to understand the emotional states of others. In this sense, emotional intelligence becomes a central psychological mechanism in interpersonal relationships, communication culture, and conflict management. A person with a high level of emotional intelligence recognizes their feelings, understands the causes of those feelings, can regulate negative emotional states, perceives the experiences of others, and uses communication strategies that reduce tension in interactions. This, in turn, creates the basis for resolving conflicts in a constructive rather than destructive manner. Youth is considered a psychologically complex and dynamic stage of development. During this period, self-awareness, independent thinking, the acquisition of social roles, the formation of a personal system of values, and the desire to defend one's position become more pronounced. At the same time, emotional instability, sensitivity, quick resentment, the need to prove oneself, and difficulty accepting criticism are also frequently observed. As a result, the likelihood of conflict situations among young people increases. If, in such situations, a young person is unable to regulate their emotions, fails to consider the perspectives of others, or adopts an aggressive stance in communication, the conflict may intensify. Conversely, young people with a high level of emotional intelligence are more capable of analyzing the situation, reducing emotional pressure, reaching compromise, and finding solutions based on mutual respect. The relevance of this topic lies in the fact that globalization, the intensification of information flows, the expansion of virtual communication, and the growth of social pressure significantly affect the psycho-emotional state of young people. In particular, relationships on social networks, rapid information exchange, social comparison, criticism, and online disputes can intensify emotional reactions in youth. Under such conditions, not only academic knowledge but also emotional competence, stress resilience, communication culture, and conflict resolution skills become increasingly important. Therefore, special attention should be paid to the development of emotional intelligence within the education system, family upbringing, and psychological support practices. The purpose of this article is to analyze the impact of the level of emotional intelligence in young people on constructive conflict resolution from a theoretical and psychological perspective, to reveal the main components of emotional intelligence, and to explain their practical significance in conflict situations. The article also discusses the possibilities of effective conflict management through the development of constructive communication, empathy, self-regulation, and a culture of mutual understanding among young people.

The psychological essence of emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the ability of an individual to understand, evaluate, regulate, and purposefully direct their own emotions and emotional states, as well as to understand the feelings of others and take them into account in the process of interaction. It serves not only to manage one's internal emotional state but also to build effective social relationships. Emotional intelligence ensures the interconnection between the cognitive and affective spheres of personality. In other words, a person evaluates a situation not only through rational

analysis but also through an understanding of its emotional content. In psychology, emotional intelligence is viewed as a system consisting of several core components. First of all, self-awareness of one's emotions is of great importance. If a person can recognize their emotions, they are able to understand their causes and respond to a situation appropriately. The second important aspect is emotion regulation. This enables an individual not to make impulsive decisions under the influence of strong emotions such as anger, resentment, fear, or anxiety, but instead to maintain self-control and evaluate the situation consistently. The third component is empathy, that is, the ability to understand the emotional states of others and to feel their inner experiences. Empathy strengthens mutual understanding in relationships and helps a person take the other side's point of view into account during conflicts. The fourth component is social skills, which include the ability to organize communication effectively, cooperate, find compromise, express one's opinion respectfully, and manage conflicts through communicative competence. The fifth factor is internal motivation, meaning an individual's inner drive to preserve relationships, solve problems, and strive for personal growth. Emotional intelligence reflects the overall psychological maturity of an individual. Especially during youth, it becomes an important factor that regulates interpersonal relationships, influences the choice of reactions in conflict situations, and determines the level of social adaptation. Young people with developed emotional intelligence do not deny their emotions; rather, they perceive them, analyze them, and express them in socially acceptable ways. This helps prevent negative emotions from escalating uncontrollably during conflict.

Causes of conflicts among young people

Conflicts among young people arise under the influence of various social, psychological, and communicative factors. First of all, during youth there is a strong desire for independence and a need to defend one's own opinions and views. This often leads to contradictions with parents, teachers, friends, or peers. In particular, during the active formation of the self-concept, criticism becomes more difficult to accept, the mechanism of self-protection intensifies, and any controversial situation may be perceived as a personal threat. Another important cause of conflict is deficiency in communication. The inability to express thoughts clearly, failure to listen to one another, unwillingness to understand the interlocutor's position, drawing hasty conclusions, and rudeness in tone or word choice all contribute to the escalation of conflict. Moreover, because young people are emotionally sensitive, even a minor disagreement may be accompanied by strong feelings of offense, anger, or resentment. The family environment also plays an important role in the emergence of conflicts. If family relationships are based on authoritarianism, excessive criticism, or emotional coldness, young people may become more inclined to respond to conflict through aggression, rejection, or withdrawal. By contrast, if they grow up in an environment where mutual respect, open communication, and the free expression of emotions are supported, they are more likely to resolve conflicts through dialogue and agreement. In addition, competition in the educational environment, grading systems, peer pressure, the struggle for social status,

the desire for leadership, and disagreements in friendship and romantic relationships also serve as sources of conflict. In the modern information environment, the increase in virtual communication, the absence of emotional tone in written messages, public discussions, and online criticism further heighten the risk of conflict. Constructive resolution is the process of overcoming a conflict situation not through violence, humiliation, pressure, or the destruction of relationships, but through mutual understanding, communication, consideration of interests, and cooperation. In constructive resolution, the main goal is not to determine a winner or a loser, but to understand the essence of the problem, identify the real causes of the conflict, and reach a decision acceptable to both sides. Constructive conflict resolution has several important characteristics. First, it requires the reduction of emotional impulsivity. In other words, a person evaluates the situation not solely from the perspective of anger or resentment, but through analysis and understanding. Second, constructive resolution is based on communication. Listening to the interlocutor, allowing them to speak without interruption, expressing one's own point of view without accusation, and maintaining mutual respect are central elements in this process. Third, it is important to separate the problem from the person. During a conflict, attention should be focused not on attacking the individual, but on the specific issue, situation, or disagreement. Fourth, constructive resolution involves a strong orientation toward compromise, cooperation, and the search for common interests. Constructive conflict resolution is especially important in the lives of young people because it not only helps eliminate a particular dispute but also determines the quality of future relationships. If a young person learns to resolve conflicts in a cultured and respectful manner, they will be able to communicate effectively in future family, professional, and social relationships as well. Emotional intelligence plays an important role at all stages of the conflict process. It affects the emergence, development, and resolution of conflict. Young people with high emotional intelligence can recognize emotional tension at the earliest stages of a conflict and attempt to prevent its escalation. They are able to correctly interpret changes in the other person's tone of voice, facial expressions, word choice, and behavior. This makes it possible to redirect communication appropriately before the conflict intensifies. During conflict, individuals often experience strong emotions such as anger, resentment, a sense of injustice, fear, or anxiety. If a young person is not aware of their emotional state, they may speak impulsively, make harsh decisions, or behave aggressively under the influence of these emotions. The ability of self-awareness allows a person to ask themselves questions such as: "What am I feeling right now?", "Why did this situation affect me so strongly?", and "Will my reaction make the situation easier or more difficult?". This creates the basis for a conscious and responsible response instead of an automatic reaction. One of the main obstacles to constructive resolution in conflict situations is uncontrolled emotional reaction. Anger, pain, jealousy, and a sense of humiliation reduce a person's communication culture and intensify the situation. The ability to regulate emotions, which is an essential component of emotional intelligence, enables a person to reduce emotional pressure, calm themselves, take a short pause from the situation, choose words carefully, and express negative feelings in socially

acceptable ways. Such young people are more likely to choose explanation, questioning, agreement, and joint problem-solving rather than destructive methods such as shouting, blaming, insulting, or breaking off relationships. Empathy occupies a central place in constructive conflict resolution. Conflict often strengthens the internal position of “I am right” and inclines a person to see only their own interests. Empathy, however, helps an individual understand the emotions, needs, and inner reasons of the other side. For example, if a young person can interpret a friend’s rude words not merely as an attack but also as a result of fatigue, anxiety, or emotional distress, their response is likely to be softer and more thoughtful. Empathy reduces confrontation and hostility and increases the likelihood of cooperation. It helps a person see conflict not as personal enmity, but as a relational problem that can be resolved. Young people with high emotional intelligence usually have well-developed communication skills. Such individuals express their opinions clearly yet respectfully; they listen to others, ask questions, clarify misunderstandings, regulate their tone of voice, and choose an explanatory rather than accusatory style. These skills are crucial for constructive conflict resolution because solving a problem depends not only on internal emotional stability but also on the ability to express oneself properly in the communication process. For instance, using “I-messages” such as “I felt uncomfortable in this situation because...” instead of accusatory and generalized phrases like “You always do this” helps soften the conflict. This method allows a person to express their feelings without forcing the interlocutor into a defensive position. A high level of emotional intelligence makes it possible to use this kind of communication culture effectively. In young people whose emotional intelligence is insufficiently developed, several problematic forms of behavior may appear during conflict. First, such individuals often fail to fully understand their own emotions, and as a result their reactions become harsh and uncontrolled. Second, because they do not take into account the emotional state of others, they may resort to blaming, mockery, rejection, or indifference. Third, instead of focusing on resolving the issue, they may turn the conflict into a struggle against the person, where the goal becomes “defeating the other side” rather than solving the problem. Young people with low emotional intelligence may also be inclined toward two extreme strategies: avoiding conflict altogether or escalating it. Although conflict avoidance may appear peaceful on the surface, in reality it preserves unresolved resentment, mistrust, and internal tension. Escalation, on the other hand, damages relationships, causes psychological harm, and worsens the socio-psychological climate within a group. Therefore, the development of emotional intelligence is important not only for individual stability but also for ensuring healthy relationships within a community. Emotional intelligence in young people does not develop solely in a spontaneous manner; it can also be fostered through purposeful psychological and pedagogical influence. In this process, the family, educational institutions, psychological services, and the broader social environment all play an important role. Within the family, it is important not to deny the emotions of children and adolescents, but to listen to them and allow them to speak freely about feelings such as resentment, anger, or fear. If parents adopt a supportive approach such as “You seem upset right now; let us try

to understand it together,” rather than saying “Do not cry” or “You should not feel this way,” the emotional awareness of young people becomes stronger. In educational institutions, emotional intelligence can be developed through classes and activities devoted to communication psychology, conflict resolution culture, teamwork, empathy, and stress management. Role-playing, situational exercises, debates, group training sessions, and reflective assignments help young people understand their own emotions, accept the perspectives of others, and master constructive strategies for dealing with conflict. Training sessions conducted by psychologists are especially valuable in developing practical skills such as self-control, the use of “I-messages,” active listening, emotional tension reduction, and compromise in communication. In addition, involving young people in literature, theatre, social projects, volunteer activities, and collective creative work has a positive influence on the development of emotional intelligence. Such activities introduce individuals to different characters, different life experiences, and different emotional states, thereby strengthening empathy and social sensitivity. Several psychological mechanisms help explain the relationship between emotional intelligence and constructive conflict resolution. The first mechanism is emotional reflection. This is the ability of a person to analyze and evaluate their internal state, which reduces impulsive actions during conflict. The second mechanism is cognitive reappraisal. It allows an individual to view a situation not only from a negative perspective but also from another angle. For example, instead of thinking “He intentionally hurt me,” a person may consider that “Perhaps he is also going through a difficult time,” which can reduce the intensity of the conflict. The third mechanism is emotional self-regulation, that is, the ability to maintain goal-oriented behavior even under the influence of strong emotions. The fourth mechanism is empathetic listening, which means listening fully to the interlocutor and taking their emotional state into account. The fifth mechanism is motivation toward cooperation, namely an internal orientation not toward “winning” but toward “solving the problem”. These mechanisms allow young people to regulate negative emotions in conflict situations, perceive the problem not as a personal attack but as a socio-psychological task, and organize communication in a way that is directed toward finding a solution.

Research methodology

The present study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and constructive conflict resolution among young people. The participants consisted of university students aged 18–25 years. Participation in the study was voluntary, anonymous, and based on informed consent. The level of emotional intelligence was assessed using the theoretical framework of the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), developed by Wong and Law (2002). The instrument evaluates emotional intelligence through four dimensions: self-emotion appraisal, others’ emotion appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion. These dimensions provide a comprehensive assessment of an individual’s ability to recognize, understand, regulate, and effectively use emotions in interpersonal situations. Participants completed the questionnaire

individually. The obtained scores were converted into percentage values to facilitate interpretation and comparison. Based on the overall percentage score, participants were classified into three levels of emotional intelligence:

- High level: 80–100%
- Moderate level: 60–79%
- Low level: below 60%

The results showed that 36% of the participants demonstrated a high level of emotional intelligence, 48% showed a moderate level, and 16% were classified as having a low level of emotional intelligence. To evaluate constructive conflict resolution, participants' behavioural tendencies during interpersonal conflicts were analyzed using indicators such as empathy, active listening, emotional self-control, cooperation, negotiation, and problem-solving orientation. The findings indicated that respondents with higher emotional intelligence demonstrated significantly greater use of constructive conflict resolution strategies than those with moderate or low emotional intelligence. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. Percentage distributions were calculated to determine the proportion of participants at each emotional intelligence level and to compare their conflict resolution behaviours. This approach allowed for a clear interpretation of the relationship between emotional intelligence and constructive conflict management among young people. The findings suggest that increasing emotional intelligence contributes to more effective emotional regulation, stronger interpersonal communication, greater empathy, and a higher tendency to resolve conflicts through cooperation rather than confrontation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the level of emotional intelligence in young people is one of the most important psychological factors determining the effectiveness of constructive conflict resolution. Emotional intelligence enables individuals to understand their emotions, regulate them, recognize the emotional states of others, demonstrate empathy, and build communication in a respectful and culturally appropriate manner. This, in turn, prevents destructive behaviors in conflict situations, such as aggression, blame, and the breakdown of relationships. The analysis shows that young people with a high level of emotional intelligence are better able to understand conflict situations in depth, regulate emotional pressure, consider the perspective of the other party, and seek to resolve problems through cooperation. By contrast, a low level of emotional intelligence can intensify impulsivity, misunderstanding, aggressive reactions, conflict avoidance, or escalation. For this reason, psychological and pedagogical measures aimed at developing emotional intelligence in young people are of great importance. Creating a supportive emotional environment within the family, introducing communication culture and conflictology-related training in educational institutions, and using psychological training and reflective methods can all contribute to the development of constructive conflict resolution skills in youth. Therefore, the development of emotional intelligence is an important condition not only for personal psychological stability but also for establishing a culture of healthy relationships in society as a whole.

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