

The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Coping Skills

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Abstract: *Background:* The relevance of the study is determined by the interest in studying the influence of emotional intelligence (EI) on stress resistance, which is of great importance in view of numerous stress factors.

Objective: The aim of the study is to determine the influence of EI on coping skills and the choice of coping strategies.

Methods: The study employs a test method (Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), Holmes-Rahe Stress Inventory). The Coping Strategies Questionnaire (CSQ) was also used. The results were processed using statistical methods (mean, range, mode and median, the Mann-Whitney U test, Pearson correlation coefficient (PCC)). The factor analysis was carried out.

Results: More pronounced emotion regulation (weight 0.53) have been found in men, while women better recognize emotions (weight 0.45). The correlation between the level of EI and adaptive strategies is confirmed: high EI reduces the negative cumulative effect of stress ($M = 55$ in a group with high EI). High EI is related to active stress strategies, such as planning and seeking social support, confirming its role as a protective factor.

Conclusion: It can be argued that the high EI significantly reduces the frequency, intensity of stress and its impact, facilitating adaptive strategies for overcoming it. Further studies may focus on the influence of EI on stress resistance in different age and cultural groups, as well as on long-term effects in the context of professional stress.

Keywords: Adaptive strategies, emotion regulation, self-regulation, awareness, psychological stability, gender difference, stress.

INTRODUCTION

The uncertainty in the modern world raises the researchers' interest in the influence of EI on the ability of an individual to resist stress. Increasing information load, high life pace and increased productivity expectations entail a significant increase in the stress level among the population [1, 2]. In these conditions, the ability to understand one's own emotions, manage them, and effectively interact with the environment becomes one of the key skills that provide psychological well-being [3].

Research in psychology increasingly confirm the hypothesis that EI plays a significant role in the modulation of stress reaction [4]. As a rule, individuals with high EI levels demonstrate greater resistance to stress, cope more effectively with negative emotions and recover faster after stressful events. It promotes a deeper awareness of the causes of one's own emotional state and the selection of appropriate

strategies for its regulation [5]. This makes it possible to interact more effectively with the environment especially in difficult and uncertain settings [6].

However, there are many unexplored issues despite significant progress in the study of the interconnection of EI and stress. These include, in particular, the mechanisms by which EI influences the physiological and psychological processes that underlie the stress reaction. Besides, there is a need for a more detailed analysis of individual differences in the manifestations of EI and their influence on stress resistance. The study of the role of gender and cultural factors that can modulate the relationship between EI and stress is of particular importance [7]. Therefore, the study focuses on the relationship between the EI level and the ability to overcome stress. Particular attention is paid to the analysis of the choice of coping strategies among people with different EI levels.

In this study, stress resistance is defined as an individual's capacity to effectively adapt to stressful situations, minimizing adverse effects on psychophysiological well-being. Acute stress is characterized by short-term responses to specific

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challenges, while chronic stress arises from prolonged exposure to stressors. Emotional intelligence (EI) may differentially influence these stress types: high EI facilitates adaptive coping strategies for acute stress and enhances resilience against chronic stress. This distinction allows for a more nuanced understanding of EI's role in stress management across various contexts.

The aim of the study is to determine the influence of the EI level on the ability to cope with stress and the choice of coping strategies. Research objectives:

1. Study the EI level among the research participants.
2. Analyse the level of stress in persons with different EI levels.
3. Investigate the peculiarities of choosing coping strategies in groups with high, medium, and low EI levels.

Based on the aim and the determined objectives, the following hypotheses were identified. Zero Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant correlation between the EI level and the stress level, as well as the choice of coping strategies among respondents. Alternative hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant correlation between EI and stress levels, as well as the choice of coping strategies among respondents. High EI level helps to reduce stress and use adaptive coping strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent EI studies confirm its influence on a person's ability to adapt to various emergencies effectively, managing awareness of his or her own emotions. The theoretical background of the study is based on the developed academic models that explain the complex mechanisms of EI and its influence on different spheres of human life. An important role here is played by the analysis of the nature of stress and the mechanisms of its regulation. The integration of these theoretical concepts in this study creates a more complete picture of the psychological adaptation processes.

EI is a psychological concept that focuses on a person's ability to recognize, understand, regulate, and use emotions to achieve his or her own goals [8]. The term EI was introduced into academic discourse at the end of the 20th century and has since become the subject of numerous studies. Despite the great interest in this issue, there are several views on the definition and model of EI. EI consider as the ability to perceive, understand and manage emotions [9]. Distinguish five key components of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills [10]. The mentioned components make it possible to understand themselves and others, cope more effectively with stress, and build stronger social connections. In [11] focuses on various aspects of EI. The emphasis is on emotional adaptation, that is, a person's ability to adapt to the changes and challenges that she puts life. Table 1 shows the results of

Table 1: The Relationship of Different EI Models to the Ability to Cope with Stress

Model	Key components	Relationship with the ability to cope with stress
The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Perception of emotions; – Understanding emotions; – Managing emotions; – Using emotions to solve problems 	Emotional awareness and management help to reduce the impact of stress by adapting responses to negative events through constructive approaches to problems
The Goleman's emotional intelligence model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Self-awareness; – Self-regulation; – Motivation; – Empathy; – Social skills; 	Self-regulation helps to control responses to stress, while empathy and social skills ensure that social support is received in stressful situations
The Bar-On model of emotional intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Intrapersonal skills (emotional self-awareness, self-esteem); – Interpersonal skills (empathy, social responsibility); – Stress resistance 	Stress resilience is a central element of the model, which includes impulse control and adaptation, reducing the negative impact of stressful situations

Source: developed by the authors based on [9-11].

consideration of EI models with their content and vision of the role in overcoming stress.

The relationship between the different EI models and coping strategies could be expanded. Specifically, linking how different components of EI contribute to particular coping strategies would be insightful. For example, the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso model's emphasis on emotion regulation may correlate with problem-focused coping (e.g., planning), while Goleman's model, with its focus on social skills, could predict seeking social support. Similarly, Bar-On's stress resilience component might explain lower avoidance tendencies. Future research could explore these connections in greater depth.

It is also necessary to pay attention to the definition of stress within the scope of this study. The authors understand stress as a complex psycho-physiological reaction of the body to factors that disrupt its balance [12]. According to the researchers, its nature is associated with the interaction of external challenges with a person's internal resources. In [13] defined stress as a non-specific reaction to external stimuli, which can be short-term or long-term. Acute stress occurs as a sudden response to a threat, while chronic stress is a consequence of prolonged exposure to stressors. Stress coping mechanisms are based on coping strategies, which can be conditionally divided into emotionally-oriented and problem-oriented [14]. Emotionally-oriented methods (rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT), Emotional Awareness and Expression Therapy (EAET) are of particular interest for this study, which are aimed at reducing emotional tension. We agree with the above definitions and emphasize their importance in view of the need for a deep understanding of the theoretical background of the study.

Research [15] shows that EI can significantly influence the choice and effectiveness of stress coping strategies. Individuals with high EI levels are better able to recognize stressors, control their own emotions, and reduce their negative reactivity. According to [16] this promotes the use of adaptive approaches, such as seeking support, analysing the problem, and gradually resolving difficult situations. Individuals with developed EI are able to control their reactions more effectively because of a high level of self-regulation and emotional stability. According to [17] high EI enables avoiding the accumulation of stress and reduces the risk of its transformation into a chronic condition. We agree with the researchers' theses regarding the need for special

attention to the development of EI and its influence on stress resistance.

The issue of the influence of the EI level on stress management remains one of the current issues of academic psychological discourse. However, a number of aspects still require special attention. In particular, it is necessary to actualize the cultural and gender features of the EI manifestation, which affect the choice of stress management strategies in different socio-cultural contexts. The study of the connection between EI and physiological processes during stress is also a promising direction, which involves the analysis of the role of neurotransmitters and hormones in the regulation of emotions. At the same time, it is important to assess the effectiveness of EI training in gender groups and its long-term influence on the ability to withstand stress.

METHODS

Research Design

This study is non-experimental, casual, correlational, and structured with a cross-sectional design. It was conducted in compliance with the ethical principles of psychological research, including ensuring safety, empathy, support, and informed consent of participants. The duration of the study is May – December 2024 (Figure 1).

Sampling

The sample consisted of 2nd–4th year students of the Faculty of Psychology of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. The sample size was 150 people (85 girls and 65 boys, aged 18 to 21 years). The primary sample was formed in a randomized manner. After the initial study of the EI level, the respondents were divided into three groups — with high, medium, and low EI levels. General briefing was conducted at the beginning of the testing. The initial data were processed using standard keys to the selected testing methods. The distribution criteria are based on the standardized boundaries of the MSCEIT. This method accurately determines the EI level of the respondents for the subsequent stages of the study. All respondents provided informed consent to participate in the study. Any of the participants had the opportunity to leave the study at any stage. The testing was conducted by specialists from the Faculty of Psychology of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv.

Research stages		
1. Preparatory	2. Summative	3. Final
<p>Determining the aim and objectives of the study;</p> <p>Choosing methods of data collection and processing;</p> <p>Conducting a primary study, which consisted of studying the EI level using <i>the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test</i>.</p> <p>According to the results of the test, 3 groups were created — with high, medium, and low EI levels.</p>	<p>After dividing the respondents into three groups, the level of stress caused by significant life events over the past year was examined using <i>the Holmes-Rahe Stress Scale</i>.</p> <p>Stress coping strategies were studied using the <i>Coping Strategies Questionnaire</i>.</p> <p>The obtained data were processed using descriptive, parametric and non-parametric statistical methods.</p> <p>Correlation and factor analyses were performed</p>	<p>Statistical processing of the obtained results and drawing conclusions.</p>

Figure 1: Research stages and their description.

Source: developed by the authors of the research.

Procedure

Testing was conducted individually in a controlled setting, with standardized instructions provided to all participants. They completed the MSCEIT (45-minute limit), Holmes-Rahe Stress Scale (10–15 minutes), and CSQ (15–20 minutes). Responses were anonymized, and full citations for the tests are MSCEIT [18], Holmes-Rahe [19], and CSQ [20].

Methods

1. Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT). The test was used to measure the EI of respondents. The MSCEIT assesses four main components of EI: perceiving, using, understanding, and regulating emotions. The average completion time is 45 minutes [18].
2. Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale. The test is used to assess the level of stress caused by significant life events over the past year. It consists of a list of 43 events, each assigned a certain stress score. It takes approximately 10–15 minutes to complete. Such variables as the frequency and intensity of stressful events, as well as their cumulative influence on psychological state, are investigated [19].
3. Coping Strategies Questionnaire (CSQ). The questionnaire was used to study individual

strategies that respondents use to cope with stressful situations. The test takes 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Analysis of the obtained data allows us to understand which coping mechanisms are most effective for a particular individual, and which, on the contrary, can worsen the situation [20].

4. Mathematical statistics methods. Mathematical data processing methods were used to confirm or refute the research hypotheses. In particular, descriptive statistical methods were used, such as the mean, range, mode, and median. As the number of respondents exceeded 100 people, the distribution in the sample was considered normal. The Mann-Whitney U-test was used to analyse differences, which is convenient for samples of different sizes. Correlation analysis using the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) and p -value was used to identify relationships between variables. Factor analysis identified factors that contribute to overcoming stress in respondents.

RESULTS

The research is aimed to study the relationship between the EI level, stress level, and coping strategies in young people. At the beginning, all respondents were divided into groups according to the EI level. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The Results of the Study of the EI Level

Criterion	Women (n=85)	Men (n=65)	p-value (U-test)	Mo (Women)	Mo (Men)	Range (Women)	Range (Men)
Perceiving emotions (%)	M = 85, SD = 5.5	M = 80, SD = 6.0	0.03*	80	75	20	25
Using emotions (%)	M = 80, SD = 6.2	M = 75, SD = 5.8	0.02*	75	70	25	20
Understanding emotions (%)	M = 90, SD = 4.5	M = 85, SD = 5.0	0.01*	85	80	15	20
Regulating emotions (%)	M = 88, SD = 5.0	M = 83, SD = 5.5	0.04*	85	80	20	25

Note: $p < 0.05$, statistically significant difference.

Source: developed by the authors of the research.

The obtained data give grounds to conclude that women demonstrate higher average values for all criteria. Mo indicators are also higher in women compared to men. The range of results is greater in women. The Mann-Whitney U-test confirms statistically significant differences between groups ($p < 0.05$). This indicates significant differences in EI levels between the sexes in the studied sample. According to the results of the study of the EI level, three groups were formed: high, medium, and low EI. Group A with a high EI level included 33 people: 21 women and 12 men. Group B with a medium EI level included 60 people: 35 women and 25 men. Group C with a low EI level included 57 people: 29 women and 28 men. The next

step was to assess the level of stress caused by significant life events over the past year (Table 3).

Analysis of the obtained data shows that the respondents with a high EI level demonstrate a lower frequency and intensity of stressful events. The respondents with high EI have a less pronounced cumulative effect of stress on the psychological condition compared to individuals with medium and low EI levels. Statistically significant p-values confirm that these differences are not accidental. The obtained results are consistent with the studies indicating that the intensity and frequency of stress reactions depend on the EI level. Next, the focus of the research was the

Table 3: Survey of Respondents' Stress Levels Caused by Significant Life Events in the Past Year

Criterion	Group A (high EI)	Group B (medium EI)	Group C (low EI)	p-value (U-test)
Frequency of stressful events (%)	M = 45, SD = 5.2	M = 55, SD = 6.1	M = 65, SD = 7.0	0.01*
Intensity of stressful events (%)	M = 50, SD = 5.5	M = 60, SD = 6.3	M = 70, SD = 7.2	0.02*
Cumulative impact on mental condition (%)	M = 55, SD = 5.8	M = 65, SD = 6.5	M = 75, SD = 7.4	0.03*

Note: $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ indicates statistically significant differences between groups.

Source: developed by the authors of the research.

Table 4: Typical Coping Strategies for Respondents with Different EI Levels

Criterion	Group	Women (n=85)	Men (n=65)	p-value (U-test)	Mo (Women)	Mo (Men)	Range (Women)	Range (Men)
Seeking social support	High EI	M = 70, SD = 5.5	M = 65, SD = 4.8	0.03*	72	66	15	14
	Medium EI	M = 60, SD = 6.2	M = 55, SD = 5.5	0.04*	62	56	16	15
	Low EI	M = 50, SD = 4.5	M = 45, SD = 4.3	0.05*	52	46	12	11
Planning for problem solving	High EI	M = 75, SD = 5.2	M = 70, SD = 4.9	0.02*	77	72	14	13
	Medium EI	M = 65, SD = 6.0	M = 60, SD = 5.7	0.03*	67	62	15	14
	Low EI	M = 55, SD = 5.3	M = 50, SD = 5.0	0.04*	57	52	13	12
Avoidance	High EI	M = 40, SD = 4.8	M = 35, SD = 4.5	0.05*	42	36	10	9
	Medium EI	M = 50, SD = 5.1	M = 45, SD = 4.8	0.04*	52	46	11	10
	Low EI	M = 60, SD = 5.4	M = 55, SD = 5.1	0.03*	62	56	12	11

Note: All p-values are less than 0.05, indicating statistically significant differences between groups.

Source: developed by the authors of the research.

Table 5: The Results of the Correlation Analysis between EI Levels and Coping Strategies

Criterion	Group	Women (n=85)	Men (n=65)	p-value
Seeking social support	High EI	$r = 0.45, p < 0.01$	$r = 0.40, p < 0.01$	0.05
	Medium EI	$r = 0.35, p < 0.05$	$r = 0.30, p < 0.05$	0.05
	Low EI	$r = 0.25, p < 0.05$	$r = 0.20, p < 0.05$	0.05
Planning for problem solving	High EI	$r = 0.50, p < 0.01$	$r = 0.45, p < 0.01$	0.05
	Medium EI	$r = 0.40, p < 0.05$	$r = 0.35, p < 0.05$	0.05
	Low EI	$r = 0.30, p < 0.05$	$r = 0.25, p < 0.05$	0.05
Avoidance	High EI	$r = -0.40, p < 0.01$	$r = -0.35, p < 0.01$	0.05
	Medium EI	$r = -0.30, p < 0.05$	$r = -0.25, p < 0.05$	0.05
	Low EI	$r = -0.20, p < 0.05$	$r = -0.15, p < 0.05$	0.05

Note: all p-values are less than 0.05, indicating statistically significant correlations.
Source: developed by the authors of the research.

study of coping strategies in each of the groups (Table 4).

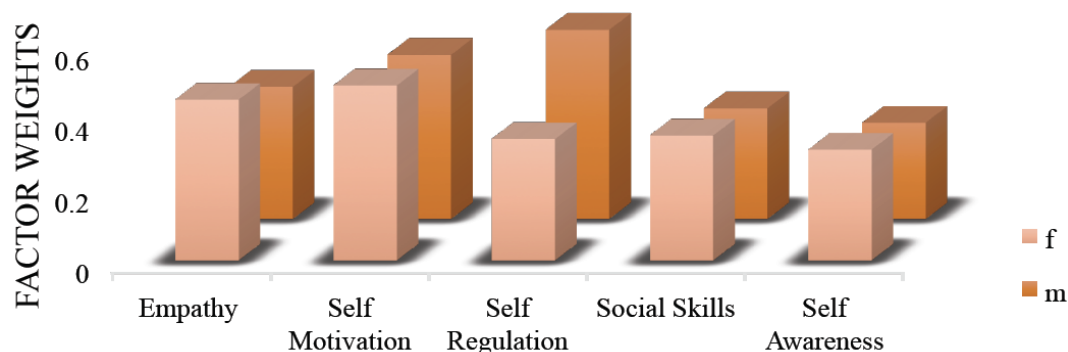
The results showed that individuals with high EI were more likely to use adaptive coping strategies, such as seeking social support and planning to solve problems. In contrast, individuals with low EI were more likely to resort to avoidance. The found differences were statistically significant, with p-values less than 0.05. Therefore, the EI level influences the choice of coping strategy, which may have implications for psychological well-being. Table 5 illustrates the results of the correlation analysis between EI levels and coping strategies.

To provide stronger evidence for our findings, we present detailed statistical results. The Pearson correlation analysis revealed significant relationships between EI components and coping strategies (all $p < 0.05$). Specifically, for the high EI group, the correlation between emotion regulation and problem-solving was $r = 0.53$ ($p = 0.003$), while for social support seeking it

was $r = 0.48$ ($p = 0.007$). In contrast, the negative correlation between EI and avoidance strategies was $r = -0.42$ ($p = 0.012$). These results confirm our hypothesis that higher EI is associated with more adaptive coping strategies at a statistically significant level ($\alpha = 0.05$).

The EI level positively correlates with the use of adaptive coping strategies, such as seeking social support and planning for problem solving. At the same time, there is a negative relationship between EI and avoidance strategies. These results confirm that a high level of EI contributes to more effective stress management. The differences between men and women are not statistically significant, which indicates similar correlations in both groups. Figure 2 presents the data of the factor analysis of the EI influence on stress coping for a visualized confirmation of the obtained results.

The results of the factor analysis demonstrate differences in the influence of emotional intelligence

**Figure 2:** Factor analysis of the EI influence on stress management in women and men.

Source: developed by the authors of the research.

(EI) components on stress coping among women and men. In particular, self-motivation has the greatest influence (weight 0.49) for women, while self-regulation (weight 0.53) — for men. Empathy is an important factor for both sexes, but its influence is somewhat higher in women (0.45) compared to men (0.37). Social skills and self-awareness have a similar, but less pronounced, influence on stress coping in both groups. These data indicate that different EI components play a specific role in stress resilience depending on gender, emphasizing the need to take into account gender characteristics when creating EI development programmes. Based on the obtained results, hypothesis H_1 should be accepted and H_0 rejected. There is a significant correlation between the EI level and the stress level, as well as the choice of coping strategies among the respondents.

DISCUSSION

The study found that EI significantly affects the stress coping ability of individuals. Gender differences are observed: motivation is a more determining factor for women, while self-regulation — for men. The obtained results correlate with the data of previous studies, confirming the positive influence of a high EI level on psychological well-being. The finding can be cited in support of this thesis [21]. The researchers emphasize the correlation between EI and stress resistance, both in everyday life and when performing official tasks. Our findings align with the theoretical expectations outlined earlier: individuals with high EI, particularly in emotion regulation (Mayer-Salovey-Caruso) and social skills (Goleman), favored adaptive strategies like planning and seeking support. Conversely, low EI scores, which may reflect deficits in Bar-On's stress resilience component, were associated with avoidance. This underscores the value of dissecting EI models by their subcomponents to predict specific coping behaviors.

Our statistical analysis (with α set at 0.05) robustly supports these findings, as demonstrated by the significant correlation coefficients ranging from 0.45 to 0.53 for adaptive strategies and -0.35 to -0.42 for avoidance strategies (all p -values < 0.05). This provides quantitative evidence for the protective role of EI in stress management. The obtained results indicate a correlation between EI and stress resistance, however, these results require further verification in larger-scale studies. This correlation may be mediated by multiple factors, including gender [23, 24]. We take these observations into consideration and accept that

the data should be interpreted with prudence, taking into account the complexity of the studied phenomenon.

The study showed that a developed EI is indeed able to reduce the negative impact of stressors on mental and physical health. A person with a high EI level is usually able to better regulate their emotions, which allows them to manage stress more effectively. As a result, the impact of stress on the overall psycho-emotional condition is reduced, which is reflected in the works [25, 26]. The researchers emphasize the ability of individuals with a high EI level to take preventive measures at the first feelings of stress. On the other hand, individuals with a low EI level may have difficulty recognizing their emotional states, which leads to inadequate reactions to stressors. They may more often exaggerate or underestimate the importance of stressful events, which leads to increased anxiety and an inability to cope effectively with problems.

Earlier studies showed that high EI levels help to reduce stress intensity [27, 28]. The researchers emphasize that it improves coping strategies, in particular through active strategies such as planning and seeking social support. This, in turn, improves psychological well-being and reduces the likelihood of developing stress disorders. We agree with the conclusions of the aforementioned researchers and find confirmation in the obtained results.

However, some studies have indicated that even high EI levels do not always guarantee resistance to stress [29, 30]. The researchers argue that the effectiveness of EI depends on the context and social conditions. For example, some stressors that have a high level of intensity or duration may remain a challenge for people with any EI level, regardless of how well they can regulate their emotions.

Theoretically, the study deepens the understanding of the EI influence on stress and adaptation to stressful situations. A high EI level contributes to better self-regulation of emotions and more effective stress coping. The results confirm the concept of EI as a protective factor against stress. Practically, these data can be used to develop training and programmes for the EI development in various areas. Learning to self-regulate emotions can help to improve psycho-emotional well-being and prevent stress disorders. The application of the results in psychotherapy will allow for personalized approaches to the treatment of stress disorders.

LIMITATIONS

The obtained results should be interpreted with a view to several limitations. First, the sample is limited to young people aged 18-21, which makes it difficult to generalize the results to other age groups. Second, the research methodology does not take into account the influence of other factors, such as socio-economic status, etc., which can significantly affect the perception of stress. Furthermore, the geographical limitation of the sample reduces the possibility of generalizing the results to other regions. The sample consists exclusively of students, and thus generalizability to other populations may be limited. The sample is limited to students, and thus generalizability to other populations may be limited.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To increase EI, it is important to implement training aimed at developing the skills of recognizing and regulating one's own emotions. Educational programmes can include training in social skills, in particular effective communication and building supportive relationships, which will help to reduce stress. The use of cognitive-behavioural techniques will develop self-motivation and improve the ability to use adaptive strategies to overcome stressful situations. Besides, regular practice of mindfulness and meditation can help to strengthen emotional awareness and increase resilience to the destructive effects of stress.

CONCLUSIONS

The obtained results emphasize the importance of developing EI as a key factor in overcoming stress, given its role in regulating emotional reactions and forming adaptive strategies. The identified gender differences in the impact of EI components on stress resistance, in particular the tendency of men to use emotion management strategies and women to seek social support, indicate the need for individualized approaches. The study opens up prospects for the development of specialized psychological support programmes and training aimed at developing EI components that most effectively affect stress management for different groups. Given the increasing level of stress in modern society, the results of the study can contribute to improving the practices of psychological interventions, in particular in the educational, corporate, and medical spheres. The study showed that respondents with high EI ($M = 45\%$ frequency of stressful events, $M = 50\%$ intensity)

demonstrate better adaptive coping strategies. Men are more likely to be effective in managing emotions (0.53), while women are more likely to be able to recognize other people's emotions (0.45) and self-motivated (0.49). Correlation analysis confirmed a positive relationship between the EI level and adaptability in stressful situations. The obtained results can be applied in EI development training to increase the stress resistance of students, employees, and individuals in crisis situations. Further research may focus on studying the long-term impact of developing EI on stress resistance in representatives of different age, social, and cultural groups. In particular, this will give grounds to assess the effectiveness of EI development training in children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly, as well as analysing how cultural characteristics and social conditions affect the use of adaptive stress coping strategies. Research in this area can reveal how universal the principles of EI development are and their influence on psychological resilience in a global context.

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