

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM IN THE CAREER OF YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

Raluca STEPAN¹, Daniel PĂȘĂRIN², Camelia STĂNCESCU²

¹University of Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Romania

²University of Craiova

Correspondence address: amalia.raluca.stepan@gmail.com

Abstract: The present study is designed to investigate the degree of correlation between emotional intelligence and self-esteem in entrepreneurship at the level of future managers. The theoretical concepts used in the theoretical foundation and in the construction of this study relate primarily to emotional intelligence, which is a field of high interest both in the sphere of behavioural sciences and the scientific world in general. The concept resonates with the emphasis on the importance of self-awareness and self-knowledge, trying to regulate the emphases put on intellect until present. The study of emotional intelligence, in correlation with the complex aspect of self-esteem placed at the critical moment of adopting the decision to open a firm, becomes an object of interest in psychological fields such as emotion neuroscience, self-regulation theory, research on metacognition or human cognitive abilities other than those related to "academic" intelligence.

The study was attended by 56 young persons, prospective or potential entrepreneurs from the South-West Oltenia Region (Romania), who attended an entrepreneurial skills course in May-September 2018, under a European-funded program, so everyone is in the face of a common situation linked to the career decision. Relationship analysis confirms the validity of the tools used in the investigated field, through the significant relationships identified, relationships in line with those highlighted by other authors.

Keywords: *career decisions, emotional intelligence, self-esteem, entrepreneurship, occupational interests.*

Introduction

The proposed theme is defined by the high scientific interest in the psychological field, but also for the great mass of people, being surprised by the actuality of the issues being a concept developed by Goleman (1998) [1] at the end of the XXth century and the beginning of the 21st century. The limitations of this new concept of the last decade can be found in the numerous researches of this construction that took place for the most part in the twentieth century, and the steps taken can be traced back to the early nineteenth century.

This research represents an important overcoming of the existing gaps in the literature on this topic, indicating the major links between the contemporary selection indicators regarding the analytical, practical and emotional intelligence and the personal competences presented by various stakeholders in entrepreneurial decisions and self-esteem.

Emotional intelligence is one of the major factors in social science that significantly influences entrepreneurial performance in business development and overcoming barriers to market entry. In this sense, we consider the selection of this sample of subjects of the research, respectively the potential entrepreneurs' valuable in the context of economic progress especially at regional level.

Starting from the premise that knowledge and skills that encompass emotional intelligence can be learned, deepened and developed, and considering the studies conducted by Slaski & Cartwright (2002) [2], which indicate that emotional intelligence scores for training sessions groups can increase significantly between the ante and the training group is represented in three essential stages of the entrepreneurial career, at each level being a different and progressive level of training in the two stages, namely the courses for business development and the work-shops for personal development. In this respect, it is concluded that emotional intelligence includes soft skills that can be learned or improved through various behavioural techniques, such as the course of entrepreneurial competences correlated with sessions of personal development.

In a study conducted by Brackett, Rivers, Reyes & Salovey (2011) [3], they demonstrated how the use of different techniques such as "the use of reading emotional fragments can improve the social processes for the members in the classroom and enhance their self-esteem". As regards the career preferences highlighted in the literature, as Crișan & Turda (2015) [4] points out, women have reported low levels of confidence in entrepreneurship decisions and problem-solving but have significantly better results in planning and collecting the career information they want to

follow. So, the knowledge and skills that encompass emotional intelligence can be learned, deepened and developed and have to be correlated with the enhancing of the self-esteem level.

In the beginning, a much less applied and developed literature was found in Romania among young adults, therefore the review of the literature is composed of studies conducted both in Romania, but especially outside it. Focusing on conceptual investigations, the researcher also found that factors influencing decision-making, career options and career engagement also in entrepreneurial direction.

Materials and Method

The research methodology is a quantitative one, and as a tool of work, a test of emotional intelligence (adapted by Roco (2004) [5], after Bar-On (1997) [6] and Goleman (1998) [1]), the test of Self-Esteem Scale created by Rosenberg (1965) [7] with a sample of at 56 respondents, young people from Craiova, and the data will be processed with SPSS program. The results are correlated and reported on data from a demographic inventory that includes a list of participants' personal data, highlighting the close link between entrepreneurship, a high level of emotional intelligence and a high level of self-esteem. Thus, the internal consistency proved by the Alpha-Cronbach coefficients was tested.

Research hypotheses

To achieve the objectives of this research, a number of assumptions were established, such us:

- I1. It is assumed that there are statistically significant differences in the level of emotional intelligence and self-esteem level according to the intervention in a group, by participating at development groups and entrepreneurial training.
- I2. It is assumed that there are statistically significant differences in the personality traits associated with the choice of profession and entrepreneurial decision (Activity, Sociability) according to employee / freelancer status. future employee / freelancer.

In order to test the established hypotheses, two psychometric instruments were used.

1. Test for emotional intelligence adapted for Romania (by Roco, 2004, [5]). The test consists of 10 items in the form of tasks. There are 10 scenarios in which a person can be found. Completing the test involves ensuring as much as possible the person's transposition into the described situation and choosing a response variant from the four predetermines, which are concrete ways of reacting and behaving for each

of the situations presented. The overall score is obtained by adding the scores of each item.

In the analysis, the internal consistency coefficient was $\alpha = 0.821$, demonstrating a strong correlation with the interventions of trainings and personal development work-shops.

2. The second test used is the test of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. We have chosen this teste, because it is a validated test with large applicability and great reliability, consisting of 10 items scale, on a Likert scale of 4 points, with great relevance for measuring positive and negative feelings about self-esteem.

A 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The scale is believed to be uni-dimensional. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, a widely used self-report instrument for evaluating individual self-esteem, was investigated using item response theory.

When analysing the internal consistency, a Cronbach Alpha $\alpha = 0.784$, the coefficient shows the increasing of self-confidence of subjects in this study through the interventions applied.

Relationship analysis confirms the validity of the tools used in the investigated field, through the significant relationships identified starting with the moment of applying the interventions until the end of the interventions and the results are strong correlated, while the relationships are in line with those highlighted by other authors.

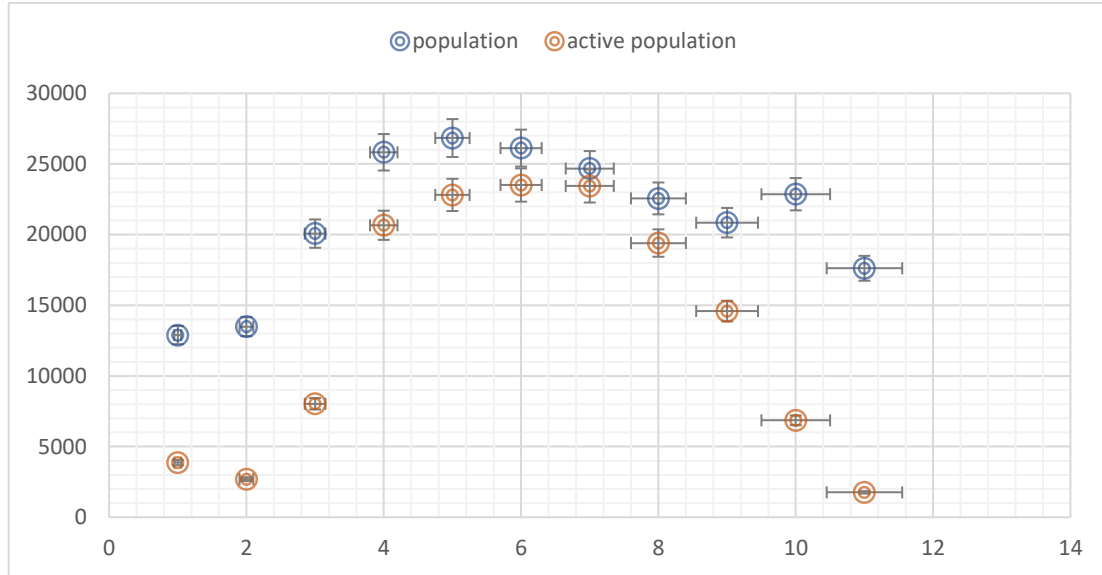
Results

The target population of this research is represented by the local population, namely the population of CRAIOVA city and its neighbouring towns. The segment targeted by the investigation through the counselling and psychology activities regarding the emotional intelligence and self-esteem are according to the data form National Institute of Statistics, the total number of the young-active population of Craiova being approximately 72,282 inhabitants, aged between 15 years old and 35 years old, out of a total population of 300,323 inhabitants. Among of these, the segment of population aged between 35 and 50 years is represented by 77.638 persons and the persons older than 50, namely: 83,885 inhabitants. We can notice from figure 1 that the correlation between inhabitants by age and population occupied in the city is positive, nonlinear and strong, namely big values of inhabitants grouped by age are associated with high values of the occupied persons by age. Thus

the results show like this: $y(\text{population by age}) = 217,4x + 12117$ and the Pearson correlation coefficient is:

$R^2 = 0,27$, namely the data are not poor correlated, while the results for the occupied population are moderated correlated with the population by age groups: $y = 497,62x + 18269$ and $R^2 = 0,115$.

Figure 1 - Dispersion of inhabitants by age and population occupied in the city of Craiova



Source - statistical analysis of data according to INSSE (Tempo, <http://statistici.insse.ro/shop/>)

In this local and regional context, we wanted to test whether through direct intervention at the level of young population from Craiova it can be increased the level of emotional intelligence and self-esteem and their capitalization at the level of entrepreneurial skills development and creating a business/business development. The direct interventions were tested at the level of 2 groups of young persons, which were interested and enrolled in a European funded project, through which were provided training of entrepreneurial competencies and work-shops for personal development with a total length of two months per each group, with three weekly meetings. So as to determine the setting of the achievements gathered through training sessions on entrepreneurial competencies and personal development sessions, we applied two different tests, for testing the emotional intelligence and self-esteem at the level of two groups with a total number of 56 young people in two different applications for each group.

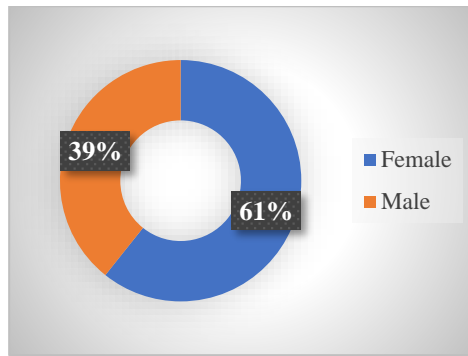
Thus, we applied the same tests before the start of the interventions in each group and at the

finalisation of each activities dedicated to each group.

The objective of this study is to enhance in the relation of emotional intelligence and self-esteem at the level of young persons involved in a common context and exploring the role of demographic variation such as age, gender, experience, qualification of young persons in determining their level of emotional intelligence and their perception of work, career, personality and predictability of the development of a business.

The population of this study is made up of young persons aged from 20 years old up to 35 years from all fields of activity, having different statuses on the labour market from student to workers and unoccupied persons, of which 61% women and 39% men. This is explicable because in the process of selection of the participants in this study we promoted the horizontal principles of the European Union on equal opportunities for women and men. The gender distribution of participants in the study is illustrated by the figure below.

Figure no. 2 - Distribution by gender of the participants



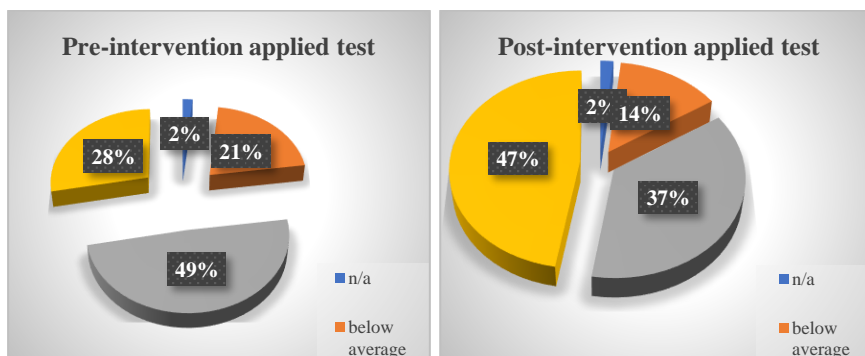
At the beginning of the activities with each group we tested the emotional intelligence level, according to the Emotional Intelligence Test (adapted by Roco, 2004, [5]). The test of emotional intelligence that we used investigate five scales, consisting of 15 subscales, involving personal characteristics related to: intrapersonal; adaptability; as well as General Mood. For the test application we used the computer and the scores were generated automatically.

The study participants had a good level of emotional intelligence, such as over 49% of them have an average level of emotional intelligence, while 28.00% have a superior level of emotional intelligence and 21% were below average. This result describes current situation of young persons, future entrepreneurs. Overlooking this situation, we considered that it can be improved through direct and focused intervention with weekly meeting during two months. Therefore, we adopted the theoretical and practical framework of the entrepreneurial course and of the personal development sessions so as to enhance the emotional intelligence of this young persons, viewed as a key factor of success in business career.

At the end of the intervention's, we retested the participants so as to verify whether the direct interventions accomplished their objective. From

the figure number 3 we can observe that emotional intelligence was improved and that it can be developed through direct interventions. Therefore, we observe at the end of the training and personal developed sessions an average improvement per each individual of at least 30%. At this session of retesting we can notice that the emotional intelligence is improved at the majority of the participants, 47% of them being characterised by an emotional intelligence above average, while 37% are in average and the persons in the category below average are just 14%. According with these results, we consider the interventions realised through the two components- training and personal development sessions enhanced the people involved in the study capacity to emphasise and to understand and manage their emotions, as well as those around them. All of these aspects describe them as being able to successfully practice their profession in the future and to succeed in attracting and retaining their clients due to their way of being and bonding. At the same time, this score also highlights their potential to come back rather than give up when and if the situation is not very good. They have all the abilities to overcome the difficulties and not dramatize until the situation recovers. The Alpha-Cronbach coefficients for the test of emotional intelligence was: $\alpha = 0.821$.

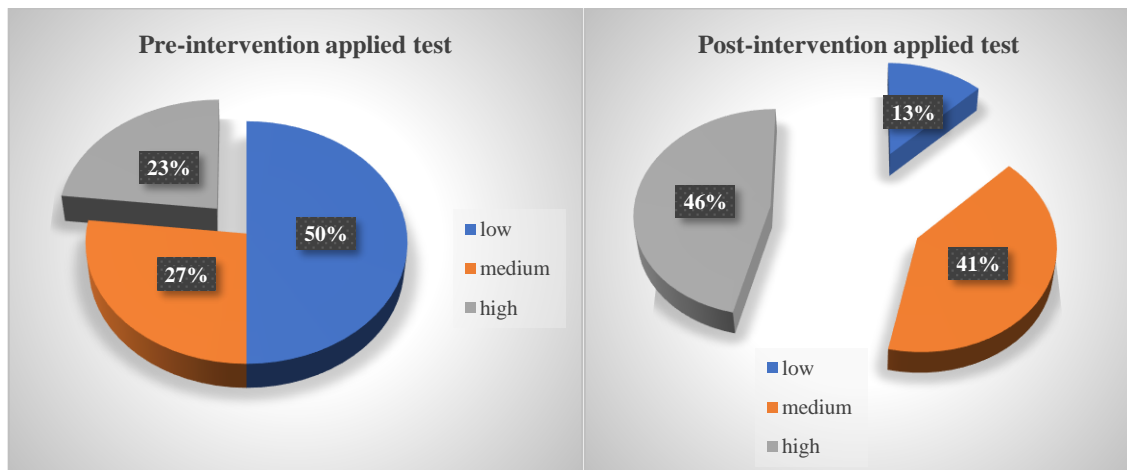
Figure no. 3 – Results of the pre and post intervention actions through the Emotional Intelligence test



By applying the Rosenberg self-esteem test, we found out that the majority (50%) of the persons included in the sample have low self-confidence, while only 23% have high self-confidence and 27% have medium self-confidence. By involving the group in trainings and sessions of personal development with practical exercises, like roll playing, brainstorming, fish bowl, personal SWOT technique and others. With this direct intervention we succeeded to improve the persons in the sample self-esteem by approximatively 40%, thus getting at a level of 46% from the persons to have high self-confidence, while 41% have a medium self-confidence and only 13% left with a low level of self-confidence. We focused

on the subjects with a low level of self-confidence, so as to overcome the effects of risks involved by a business, that persons with strong self-esteem can approach positively. In addition, low self-esteem individuals are less likely to take risks than other subjects, perhaps from the need to protect themselves from the threat, with few resources of self-protection. By comparison, individuals with high self-esteem have self-protective resources rich and easily accessible, and so they will be able to easily cope with one threat and this was the feature that we tried to strengthen. The Alpha-Cronbach coefficients for the self-esteem questionnaire was: $\alpha = 0.784$.

Figure no. 4 – Results of the pre and post intervention actions through the Self-esteem scale



We calculated the correlation coefficient between first testing and the second session of testing (after intervention), by using the linear correlation coefficient Pearson. The correlation was then corrected with the sampling error in the first phase. In order to obtain a more accurate estimation of the correlation of both test for the population, these correlations were corrected for the variability of the whole sample of persons. For the emotional intelligence teste, the scores for each scale were automatically tabulated and converted into standard scores based on a mean of 100 and we used a standard deviation of 15. According to the results in Table 1, we attest 5 significant positive correlations between emotional intelligence and its main components, while in Table 2 we tested 3 robust positive correlations for self-esteem. The main finding of the study concludes that there is a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and self-esteem that can improve the

abilities to be a leader or a manager of your own business.

For both tests, for testing the emotional intelligence, as well as for the self-esteem scale, we can notice with few exceptions, that was realised an improvement of the average of the persons performances at the retesting compared with the first testing phase. In the case of emotional intelligence, the general mood and interpersonal skills were improved, having a strong correlation, due to the trainings and personal development sessions.

The performance average at the first test in both cases (emotional intelligence and self-esteem), shows a level of performance are in average. At the second testing, after intervention the results are improved significantly, showing a group of people prepared to be a leader and develop a business. The correlations at first test are positive and good, while at the second test are improved, being better correlated and being strong.

Table 1 – Correlations at the level of emotional intelligence

Test	First testing		Retesting		Correlation Coefficients		The threshold of significance: "p"
	Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation	r	r (corrected)	
Intrapersonal	9,87	2,71	11,02	2,26	0,58	0,65	p≤0,05
Interpersonal	9,91	3,41	12,24	2,97	0,76	0,85	p≤0,05
Stress Management	9,55	2,18	11,21	1,88	0,69	0,75	p≤0,05
Adaptability	9,58	2,14	10,34	1,81	0,79	0,84	p≤0,05
General mood	9,28	2,98	13,30	1,35	0,84	0,89	p≤0,05

Table 2 - Correlations at the level of self-esteem

Test	First testing		Retesting		Correlation Coefficients		The threshold of significance: "p"
	Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation	r	r (corrected)	
Self-depreciation	15,02	2,15	18,21	2,64	0,66	0,77	p≤0,05
Self-esteem	24,01	2,07	28,4	2,54	0,79	0,81	p≤0,05
Vanity	35,42	3,08	36,01	0,57	0,69	0,78	p≤0,05

Discussions

The results of this study are consistent with those achieved by Sellakumar (2017) [8], who try to enhance the Emotional Intelligence (EI) of a sample of paramedics employed by applying behavioural interventions and then to identify the emotional intelligence after surgery. Similarly, a pre-and post-interventional study that used human therapy model was performed Maree & Finestone (2017) [9], noting a significant improvement score Interpersonal Adaptability, and Total Mood of emotional intelligence. This research shows that 9 out of 15 subscales coefficient emotional intelligence significantly increased after surgery, which helps us to understand and test results applied, in light of developments in the three categories of persons included in the sample. Improvements in emotional intelligence and decision-making capacity after the intervention were found by Sellakumar.

Contrary to this outcome, the conclusions of Eniola & Busari (2007) [10] show that there is no

improvement in the emotional intelligence training program. In the present finding there is no improvement in the overall EQ score, which is contrary to the conclusions of Maree & Finestone (2017) [9]. Therefore, the study was focused only on the dimension of stress management, which showed an improvement in post-test scores compared to the control group. Unlike expectations, the reality subscale score dropped significantly after intervention in the experimental group, which is contrary to the outcome. In this study, the reality score was increased from 97 to 109.

These studies have a correlated design that investigates the relationship between the entrepreneurial profile, the level of career indecision, and the effectiveness of self-esteem of careers among young people. The research method used by the authors in these studies was the statistical analysis by applying the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and other validation tests with the application of two tools for

determining the difficulties in the career decision and the efficiency of the decision making in the career. The results of the two studies mentioned above resonate by observing a significant positive correlation between the effectiveness of the career decision and the self-esteem, which means that there is a moderately associated level between the two hypotheses. The results obtained after calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient led to the observation of a significant positive correlation between the effectiveness of the career decision and the self-esteem $r = 0.71$, $p < 0.05$, meaning that there is a strong and positive association between the two variables.

The limitations of the present study are found in the sample selected for the investigation, given that high number of young persons at local and regional level, which may lead to generating results that may not have a high degree of precision in generalizing of the results obtained. I propose to overcome this limitation by selecting a sample of increased relevance, which allows for comparisons to be made, namely the choice of at least 10% of the young people who want to develop a business in the regional area, being a more complex spectrum of the sample and has a higher degree of accuracy in generating the final results. In our study, the sample selected represented 20% of the whole population who attended the courses of entrepreneurial competencies and enrolled in the project, wishing to open a new business at regional level.

Another limitation was made at the level of the two studies from the application of two instruments that are validated and adapted to the Romanian population. We believe that in the future research, the application of four instruments (for decision-making, career, emotional intelligence and personality) that are calibrated, validated and adapted to the population of our country will allow their psychometric properties to remain unchanged and the results to be meaningful and correct.

From another point of view, a limitation of these study could be the re-integration into research of endogenous variables (e.g. dysfunctional beliefs, personality traits, perfectionism) that could provide a wider view of the difficulties of entrepreneurial decision of the participants in the study. In order to overcome this limitation, we propose the use of the four dimensions, their

correlation, as endogenous variables to ensure the robustness of the statistical results.

The study was conducted only on a small part of Romania, namely the South-West Oltenia region. Therefore, it is necessary to take the sample from different regions of Romania.

Conclusions

Career construction theory responds to the need for the 21st century labour market as it focuses on the importance of the professional career chosen, therefore, the concept of professional career, in relation to elections, can be related to decision-making, emotional intelligence and personality.

We can conclude that emotional intelligence is the ability of a person to use emotions effectively and productively, correlated with the self-esteem can provide the features for developing a business. We underline that both emotional intelligence and self-esteem can be improved by applied techniques via training and sessions of personal development. Many schools and educational organizations have begun integrating the development of emotional intelligence into their educational programs. It is becoming increasingly clear that these skills can be one of the foundations of high career performance for entrepreneurs.

The research is evaluated on the basis of the specialized literature dedicated to emotional intelligence and self-esteem. Moreover, as part of the objectives of this work is self-esteem and emotional intelligence in light of the influence of the entrepreneurial career or, more specifically, of the relationships that arise between these two dimensions. Taking into account the first results of research questions, indicates that people with a high level of emotional intelligence can become easily involved in entrepreneurial development. In view of the second research question, the results suggest that the ability to perceive and understand emotion and the ability to manage emotions and a high degree of self-esteem have a positive impact on development of a business and accepting risks. Although the main hypothesis is not fully supported (the ability to express emotions fails to predict entrepreneurial choices), since the general competences of emotional intelligence explain a high percentage of the variability of self-esteem and entrepreneurial involvement. We can conclude that emotional intelligence influences and a high degree of self-esteem positively

involvement in entrepreneurship but also in its evolution. We can also conclude that we have succeeded in generalizing the idea of a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem that can be improved by direct interventions.

References

- [1]. Goleman, D. (1998). Working with emotional intelligence. *New York: Bantam Books*.
- [2]. Slaski, M. & Cartwright, S. (2002). Health, performance and emotional intelligence: An exploratory study of retail managers. *Stress and Health: Journal of the International Society for the Investigation of Stress*, 18(2), 63-68, DOI: 10.1002/smi.926
- [3]. Brackett, M. A., Reyes, M. R., Rivers, S. E., Elbertson, N. A. & Salovey, P. (2011), Classroom emotional climate, teacher affiliation, and student conduct, *Journal of classroom Interaction*, Vol. 46, 1, pg. 27-36
- [4]. Crişan, C. & Turda, S. (2015) - The connection between the level of career indecision and the perceived self-efficacy on the career decision-making among teenagers. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 209, 154-160;
- [5]. Roco, M. (2004). Creativitate și inteligență emoțională. *Iași: Polirom*.
- [6]. Bar-On, R. (1997). The Emotional Intelligence Inventory (EQ-I): Technical manual. *Toronto: Multi-Health Systems*.
- [7]. Rosenberg, M. (1965). Society and the adolescent self-image. Princeton, NJ: *Princeton University Press*.
- [8]. Sellakumar, G. K. (2017), Efficacy of behavioural interventions in the development of emotional intelligence among paramedical students, *International Journal of Education and Psychology in the Community*, vol. 25, issues 1, Pages 49-64
- [9]. Maree, J.B. & Finestone, M. (2017) - The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Human Modeling Therapy given to a Youth with Bipolar Disorder, *International journal of adolescence and youth*, 13(3), DOI: 10.1080/02673843.2007.9747974
- [10]. Eniola, S.M. and Busari, A.O. (2007) - Emotional Intelligence in Promoting Self-Efficacy of the Visually Impaired Fresh Students of Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, Nigeria, *The Social Sciences*, Volume: 2, Issue: 2 , 152-155.