

Understanding the Works of Art by Students with Different Levels of Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract: The article reveals the relationship between the characteristics of emotional intelligence and components of understanding the works of art through the use of questionnaires developed by N. Hall, D. V. Lyusin, M. A. Manoilova, and the methods of mathematical statistics. Descriptive components and substantial characteristics of emotional intelligence presented at a young age are considered. The results of the correlation analysis, indicating the presence of interconnections between the indicators of understanding the works of art and characteristics of emotional intelligence, are provided in the article and discussed. Peculiarities of understanding the works of art by students studying in secondary professional and higher educational institutions, with a different level of development of emotional intelligence, are revealed.

1. Introduction

Art is a powerful tool for translating meanings, which can be expressed in the formation of a specific model of perception of the world or contribute to the development of the personality as a whole. Due to the fact that works of art are an indirect channel of information transfer, and are focused on secondary meanings, the question of studying the factors contributing to the understanding of art becomes relevant. Emotional intelligence may be one of such factors, which is defined as “a person's ability to recognize, accept, and regulate the emotional states and feelings of other people and oneself” (M. A. Manoilova) [6].

Studies of the features of understanding of art are mainly devoted to the study of the structure and root causes that manifest themselves in childhood (preschool and primary school periods). So, the study of T. V. Ivkina and E. V. Savushkina is devoted to the study of the perception of works of art in the preschool age [5]. It is worth noting that these and many other authors use the concept of the “perception of art.” This concept is revealed inside the study through a description of the structure and relationship, which allows us to use it as a synonym for “understanding.” The results obtained by the authors show that the ascertaining level prevails in preschool age. This level is inherent in the child, not only when considering works of art, but when perceiving the world as a whole. M. B. Batyuta and co-authors note that a similar trend persists in primary school age. Besides, some children become able to understand the secondary meaning of the works, but only with prior education [2].

Studies of older children mainly affect the adolescent period and are focused on the subsequent practical application when introducing a child to works of art. At the same time, levels of perception are already associated with personality traits. Studies of the features of understanding art in adolescence and adulthood are presented in much smaller numbers. In our opinion, in these age periods, a person is able to access all his experience through individual personality characteristics. In this connection, in this work, we will consider the features of understanding works of art and the influence of emotional intelligence on this process.

J. Meyer, P. Salovey and D. Caruso developed the theory of emotional and intellectual abilities. They also proposed defining emotional intelligence as a clearly defined and measurable ability to process the information contained in emotions, determine the meaning of emotions, their relationship with each other, use emotional information as the basis for thinking and decision making [7]. In their theories, M. A. Manoilova and D. V. Lyusin distinguish the intrapersonal and interpersonal components of emotional intelligence. T. P. Berezovskaya proves the possibility of developing emotional intelligence through

specially organized training. I. N. Andreeva develops a number of programs for the development of emotional intelligence for different age groups [1].

In the age periodization, L. S. Vygotsky defines the age from 18 to 25 years as “the beginning of a mature life” or late youth [4]. Emotional intelligence in adolescence has its developmental characteristics, different from other age periods. Researchers note that young people with a high level of intrapersonal emotional intelligence have some features. Among such features are the desire to acquire new knowledge, the ability to a holistic positive perception of the world, the ability to self-esteem, the ability to live “here and now” and feel the continuity of the past, present and future (that is, to see life from different timelines).

The aim of our work is to determine the features of understanding of works of art by students with various levels of development of components of emotional intelligence.

2. Materials and Methods

In accordance with the purpose of the work, a study was conducted to determine the characteristics of the understanding of works of art by students with different levels of emotional intelligence.

The study involved first-third year students of secondary vocational education organizations and universities of the city of Kemerovo in the areas of training ($n = 41$); the average age was 18.5 years. To determine the features of understanding of fiction, the subjects analyzed the following pictures: "Pine in Saint-Tropez" by P. Signac, "Portrait of Henrietta Hirschman" by V. Serov, "Apples and Oranges" by P. Cezanne, and "Cutting Line" by V. Kandinsky. The subjects were asked to describe their emotions regarding what they saw, describe the work, and suggest what kind of meaning the author wanted to convey through his work.

The following methods were used to study the level of emotional intelligence: a methodology for determining the level of emotional intelligence (N. Hall); questionnaire EmIn (D. V. Lyusin); the technique for diagnosing emotional intelligence – MEI (M. A. Manoilova). In order to ensure the reliability of the results, we used the mathematical and statistical methods (Statistica 10). To describe the results of the study, descriptive statistical methods were used.

3. Research Results

Analysis of the average values of the representation of answers to each of the questions allows us to draw conclusions regarding how the works of art are interpreted. When designating emotions under test, subjects tend to call them specific words, regardless of the pole of the emotion. When they answer the question about what is depicted in the picture, subjects more often indicate a non-detailed listing of objects (3.02). As a rule, enumerations are specific in nature; for example, a woman, fruits and cloth, etc. General description, such as the autumn forest, life with fruits, etc., presented less. Subjects turn to direct connections (1.8) and statements (1.2), answering a question about a possible idea that the author put into the work. This can be illustrated by the following examples: the author wanted to show the beauty of the autumn forest, but just depicts a beautiful woman, etc. Assumptions about the existence of meaning that does not have a direct connection with the image are presented much less frequently (0.81). Thus, we can conclude that the subjects interpret the works through their everyday and emotional experience and think about the author's position to a lesser extent.

The results obtained from the questionnaires of emotional intelligence suggest that the data obtained on the “Integrative Level of Emotional Intelligence” scale of N. Hall's method are characterized by the greatest dispersion. The “Understanding one own emotions” scale, parameters of the questionnaire EmIn by D. V. Lyusin, is characterized by the smallest dispersion. The largest scatter is observed in the data for individual indicators, which reflect the level of development of emotional intelligence in grouping blocks, namely, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and integral aspects. Probably, this fact indicates a high individuality of the results of the methods.

The average value of the indicator “Managing one own emotions” (0.3) in the group of subjects shows a low level of development of this component of emotional intelligence – no high indicators. Based on the results, we can talk about the average level of development of meaningful characteristics of the emotional intelligence of students of secondary professional and higher education organizations in a given area.

To identify the relationships between indicators of understanding works of art and components of emotional intelligence, the data were subjected to statistical analysis using correlation matrices (Table 1).

TABLE 1. RELATIONSHIP OF INDICATORS (SIGNIFICANT AT THE LEVEL OF $P < 0.05$)

	Emotional awareness	Managing someone else's emotions	Understanding own emotions	Common understanding of emotions	Awareness of the feelings and emotions of others
Clear identification of one positive emotions	-0.32				
Not a detailed description of one positive emotions	0.38				
Clearly identified negative emotions		0.37			-0.41
Desire to detail the depicted objects			-0.35		
Understanding the secondary meaning of the work				-0.35	

In the course of our study, we obtained results confirming the hypothesis that there is a relationship between the level of development of the components of emotional intelligence and the characteristics of understanding works of art. We obtained inverse correlations between the following scales: "Awareness of the feelings and emotions of others" and "clearly marked negative emotions" (-0.41), "general scale of understanding of emotions," and "understanding of the secondary meaning of a work" (-0.35), "Understanding of one's emotions" and "desire to list in detail the objects depicted" (-0.35), "understanding one's emotions" and "clearly indicating one's positive emotions" (-0.32). Moreover, in the latter case, a direct correlation was found between "understanding one's own emotions" and their "non-detailed designation" (0.38). In this case, the results may indicate that the better the subjects understand their and other people's emotions, the more general and incomplete they describe works of art. Less attention is paid to the search for hidden meaning.

4. Discussion

In the course of the study, we obtained results indicating an average level of development of emotional intelligence, as well as the desire to perceive art through everyday images and our own experience.

In our opinion, the correlations obtained on the scales of "secondary meaning" and "general understanding of emotions" can be explained by the fact that the search for meaning involves cognitive processes to a greater extent, rather than the emotional sphere. In other cases, we can assume that works of art are more oriented towards a complex of emotions and rarely involve isolating individual ones. In this case, emotional awareness may impede the purpose of art. This question will be the subject of our further study.

5. Conclusion

Summarizing the results of the work, we can argue that the goal of our study has been achieved, namely, an attempt to determine the features of understanding of works of art by students with different levels of development of the content characteristics of emotional intelligence has been made. After analyzing the scientific literature on the stated topic, we came to the conclusion that the issue of understanding works of art in the student environment has been little studied, and adolescence is sensitive to the development of emotional intelligence. The features of emotional intelligence in adolescence include the following: the desire for self-actualization, for the acquisition of new knowledge, skills; the ability to self-esteem; the ability to accept responsibility; the ability to holistic perception of the environment, etc.

The data obtained indicate the presence of features of understanding the works of art of students with different levels of emotional intelligence.

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