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The Relationship between Trait Emotional Intelligence and Vocational Interests of Greek 10th and 11th Grade Students

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and vocational interests using a sample of 272 Greek 10th and 11th Grade students. Trait Emotional Intelligence model (Petrides & Furnham, 2000, 2001, 2003) and Holland's RIASEC (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising & Conventional) vocational interest model are used. Trait Emotional Intelligence is assessed with the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Adolescent Short Form (TEIQue-ASF) (Petrides, Sangareeau, Furnhum, & Frederickson, 2006) and the RIASEC types are assessed with the Self-Directed Search-SDS (Holland, 1994). The results show that trait emotional intelligence is positively correlated to the Enterprising Type in all SDS subscales. Additionally, emotional intelligence has low positive correlations with the Investigative and Realistic Types (only in the "Competencies" and "Self-Estimates" subscales), and the Social and Conservative Types (only in the "Competencies" subscale). Implications for research and adolescents' career counselling are also discussed.

Keywords

Trait Emotional Intelligence, Vocational Interests, RIASEC Types

1. Introduction

During recent years, there has been a notable interest regarding the concept of Emotional Intelligence not only in

terms of psychology but in career counselling as well. As we progress into the 21st century, the changing social arrangement of work that has emerged poses new challenges to career counsellors. Well-established career theories that dominated career counselling during the 20th century seem insufficient to address the needs of people in today's postmodern economy. The majority of career theories were based on assumptions regarding stability of personal characteristics, fixed sequence of career stages and linear careers, access to the labor market and secures jobs in bounded organizations etc., while the role of emotions was underrepresented.

New theories that have emerged are based on the philosophical positions of constructivism and social constructionism (e.g. Savickas, 2005), and highlight the significance of self-efficacy beliefs (e.g. Bright & Pryor, 2005; Krumboltz, 2009; Bright & Pryor, 2011), adaptability (e.g. Savickas, 1997), and hope and optimism (e.g. Niles, Amundson, & Neault, 2011). In this context, it becomes clear that the role of emotional intelligence in career counselling is crucial; and further research is needed to better understand its relationship with vocational interests and, by extension, with career choices.

1.1. Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) can be defined as the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior (Coleman, 2008). Emotional intelligence also reflects the ability to link intelligence, empathy and emotions to enhance thought and understanding of interpersonal dynamics (Mayer, 2008). However, substantial disagreement exists regarding the definition of EI, with respect to both terminology and operationalization. Petrides and Furnham (2000, 2001, 2003) proposed a distinction between two EI constructs: a) trait EI (or "trait emotional self-efficacy") and b) ability EI (or "cognitive-emotional stability"). Trait EI refers to a constellation of emotion-related self-perceived abilities and dispositions assessed via self-report measurements; whereas Ability EI refers to a constellation of emotion-related cognitive abilities assessed via maximum performance tests.

Factor analytic research led to the empirical definition of Trait EI as a constellation of emotion-related dispositions and self-perceived abilities representing a distinct composite construct at the lower levels of hierarchical personality structures (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). The incremental validity of the construct vis-à-vis both the Giant Three and the Big Five has been demonstrated in several independent studies (e.g. Petrides, Frederickson, & Furnham, 2004; Saklofske, Austin, & Minski, 2003; Van der Zee & Wabeke, 2004). Overall, Trait EI appears to have significant predictive and explanatory utility in many different contexts.

1.2. Vocational Interests: The RIASEC Model

Holland's theory of vocational interests (1959, 1966, 1973, 1985, 1997) is widely used in practice and in scientific work. Within this theoretical framework vocational interests are defined as an expression of personality. Holland's theory is centered on six basic types of vocational interests: the Realistic, the Investigative, the Artistic, the Social, the Enterprising and the Conventional type. Each of these interest types is characterized by certain preferences for vocational activities. In the same way, there are six basic types of working environments. Each environment is dominated by people with the same type of interests (i.e. a realistic environment is dominated by realistic types of people). An important assumption of Holland's theory is that people search for environments in which they can express their interests (i.e. realistic types seek realistic environments, social types seek social environments and so on). Environments attract people with certain characteristics and environments are also influenced by the people who work in them.

The following description of types of people is proposed by Holland (1997: p. 21). A Realistic person prefers activities that entail the explicit, ordered, or systematic manipulation of objects, tools, machines, and animals (e.g. electrician or mechanic). The Investigative type is characterized best by a preference for activities that entail the observational, symbolic, systematic, and creative investigation of physical, biological, and cultural phenomena (e.g. biologist or medical technologist). An Artistic person prefers ambiguous, free, unsystematic activities that entail the manipulation of physical, verbal, or human materials in order to create forms of art or products. They also have an aversion to explicit, systematic, and ordered activities (e.g. writer or interior decorator). The Social type favors activities that entail the manipulation of others by informing, training, developing, treating, or enlightening (e.g. teacher or counselor). The Enterprising person is characterized by a preference for activities that fentail the manipulation of others in order to attain organizational goals or economic gain (e.g. sales

person or manager). Conventional persons prefer activities that involve the explicit, ordered, and systematic manipulation of data (e.g. bookkeeper or banker). Holland postulates specific relations between the six interest dimensions. Within his theoretical framework the six themes are represented in a hexagonal structure.

The resemblance of a person or an environment to one or more of these types determines the RIASEC-profile. The profile is represented as a letter code, based on the ranking of the raw RIASEC-scores. Holland (1985) has also introduced the concepts of congruence, consistency and differentiation. If the characteristics of the environment resemble those of the person, then the RIASEC-profiles of person and environment are said to be "congruent". The concept of "consistency" of a profile refers directly to the hexagonal structure of the different types. A code is consistent when it is composed of adjacent types in the hexagonal model. The greater the distance in the hexagon between the dominant themes, the less consistent a profile is. The concept of "differentiation" is the degree to which the RIASEC-profile is more or less varied. The differentiation score reflects the variance in RIASEC-scores. Undifferentiated profiles have low, medium or high scores on all themes, while differentiated profiles have one or more dominant themes.

1.3. Aims of the Present Study

The main aim of the study is to explore the relation between vocational interests (as assessed via the RIASEC model) and trait Emotional Intelligence. Review of the existing research literature exposes a gap in this area. Few research studies have been conducted within this particular subject; and most of the existing studies utilized older adults as participants.

It is expected that Emotional Intelligence will be positively correlated with Holland's Social, Artistic, and Enterprising types. These expectations are predicated based on the findings of Caruso et al. (2002), Tombs (2004), and the ideas of Goleman (2006). Furthermore, Puffer's research (2011) supports these hypotheses with the exception of the correlation with the enterprising type. Holland's (1992) descriptions of the RIASEC themes also influence the direction of the predictions; specifically, his depiction of Social types tending to be empathetic, warm, people helpers, adept at interpersonal skills; on Artistic types as being intuitive, sensitive, imaginative creators; and on Enterprising types being optimistic, excited, efficient managers, apt in leadership (Donnay, Morris, Schaubhut, & Thompson, 2004).

It is also expected that Emotional Intelligence will be a negative or non-significant predictor for the Realistic, Investigative, and Conventional types. Again, the rationale is based on the correlational results of the aforementioned researches and Holland's depiction of Realistic types as being asocial, uninvolved, uninsightful, producers of concrete outcomes; of the Investigative types being reserved, independent, introspective, rational, solvers of scientific problems and tasks; and of the Conventional types being inhibited, inflexible, unimaginative, processors or organizers of information (Donnay et al., 2004; Holland, 1992). Additionally, the present study will investigate whether the various demographic characteristics (gender, grade, parent's educational level, place of residence) differentiate the level of trait Emotional Intelligence and of the RIASEC types.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The sample consisted of 272 Greek students attending the 10th and 11th grade. The sample was derived from the regional unit of Imathia in Northern Greece. The majority of the participants (78%) were living in the city of Veria, whereas the remainder (22%) resided in nearby rural areas. In all, 127 (46.7%) of the participants were boys and 145 (53.3%) were girls (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution (absolute and relative frequencies) of the students according to their gender and grade.

| Gender | Grade | | | | | | Total | | |
| | 10th Grade | | | 11th Grade | | | | | |
	F	rf	crf	F	rf	crf	F	rf	crf
Boy	61	44.2	44.2	66	49.3	49.3	127	46.7	46.7
Girl	77	55.8	100	68	50.7	100	145	53.3	100
Total	138	50.7		134	49.3		272	100	

2.2. Measures

Trait Emotional Intelliegence Questionnaire-Adolescent Short Form (TEIQue-ASF) (Petrides, Sangareeau, Furnhum, & Frederickson, 2006). The TEIQue is a self-report inventory that covers the sampling domain of trait EI comprehensively. It comprises 153 items, and encompasses 15 subscales organized under four factors: well-being, self-control, emotionality, and sociability. Additionally, it measures global trait EI (Petrides, 2009). TEIQue-SF is a 30-item questionnaire designed to measure global trait emotional intelligence (trait EI). It is based on the content of the full version of the TEIQue. Two items from each of the 15 facets of the TEIQue were selected for inclusion, based primarily on their correlations with the corresponding total facet scores (Cooper & Petrides, 2010; Petrides & Furnham, 2006).

The TEIQue-ASF is a simplified version, in terms of wording and syntactic complexity, of the adult short form of the TEIQue. The ASF version, also, comprises of 30 short statements, two for each of the 15 trait EI facets, designed to measure global trait EI. The internal consistency reliability of the scale in the present study is 0.76. This form can be used successfully with children as young as 11 years old.

Self-Directed Search-SDS (Holland, 1994).The Self-Directed Search (SDS) is an easy-to-use, self-administered test that helps individuals identify their vocational interests. Requiring 35 - 45 minutes to complete, respondents answer questions about their aspirations, activities, competencies, occupations, and self-estimate and then calculate their total scores. SDS comprises five parallel scales to assess the six interest types. The scales refer to: 1) "occupational daydreams" (the respondent is asked to list up to 8 occupations that he would like to do); 2) "activities" (this comprises six subscales and measures the activities that the person likes to participate in, in relation to each type); 3) "competencies" (this comprises six subscales and measures the competencies that the participant believes that he/she possesses in relation to each type); 4) "occupations" (this comprises six subscales and measures the occupations that one would like to engage in, in relation to each type) and 5) "self-estimates" (this comprises six subscales and measures the general abilities that the participant believes that he/she possesses in relation to each type). The "Activities" and "Competencies" scales consist of 66 items each (11 items assessing each type), the "Occupations" scale consists of 84 items (14 items assessing each type), and the "Self-estimates" scale consists of 12 items (2 items assessing each type). For the purpose of this study, the "Occupational Day-Dreams" scale was not included. The internal consistency reliability coefficients in the present study ranged from 0.77 to 0.84 for the "Activities" Scale, from 0.70 to 0.83 for the "Competencies" Scale, from 0.80 to 0.87 for the "Occupations" Scale, and from 0.45 to 0.79 for the "Self-estimates" scale.

2.3. Procedure

After obtaining permission from the Greek Ministry of Education to conduct the research in Greek public schools, a letter explaining the aims of the research was sent to the school principals. The children were given oral and written instructions describing the procedure and were asked to work on their own. Testing took place exclusively in class. No time constraints were imposed and the children were assured that they could withdraw from the study at any point, if they so wished.

2.4. Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics were calculated for all scales and subscales of the questionnaires. T tests and one-way ANOVAs were used in order to examine whether gender, grade, place of residence or parents' education level differentiate students' score in the various scales and sub-scales. Finally, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated in order to determine the correlations between vocational interests' type and trait emotional intelligence.

3. Results

3.1. Vocational Interests

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of the scores of students for the four scales of SDS. The highest score appeared for the Social type in all four scales. Enterprising, Artistic and Investigative types followed with small differences in their scores. Finally, the Conventional and Realistic types demonstrated the lowest scores for all scales.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations for the scales of SDS.

Types/ Scales	Activities			Competencies			Occupations			Self-estimates		
	M	S.D.	N	M	S.D.	N	M	S.D.	N	M	S.D.	N
R	2.99	2.84	264	3.93	2.99	270	2.08	2.57	270	7.01	3.19	269
I	5.43	3.15	267	5.40	2.75	268	4.41	3.35	268	7.48	3.81	270
A	5.37	3.00	266	5.42	2.57	270	4.61	3.69	267	8.51	3.45	269
S	6.46	2.78	264	7.67	2.33	267	5.20	4.00	270	10.53	2.55	270
E	5.57	3.15	270	5.79	2.87	269	4.41	3.73	269	8.16	3.06	270
C	3.69	3.08	270	4.88	2.83	265	2.36	3.08	270	7.94	3.42	269

Note 1. "Activities": Min: 0, Max: 11. "Competencies": Min: 0, Max: 11, "Occupations": Min: 0, Max: 14, "Self-estimates": Min: 2, Max: 12.
Note 2. "R" = Realistic type, "I" = Investigative type, "A" = Artistic type, "S" = Social type, "E" = Enterprising type, "C" = Conventional type.

T-Tests were performed to examine whether gender differentiates the score in the RIASEC types. For the "Activities" scale, gender was found to differentiate the scores in Realistic [$t(262) = 9.20$, $p < 0.001$], Artistic [$t(264) = −6.21$, $p < 0.001$] and Social types [$t(262) = −6.80$, $p < 0.05$]. Boys achieved higher scores (M = 4.48, S.D. = 3.06) than girls (M = 1.67, S.D. = 1.80) for the Realistic type and lower scores for the Artistic (M = 4.23, S.D. = 2.75) and Social types (M = 5.28, S.D. = 2.83) than girls (M = 6.37, S.D. = 2.85 and M = 7.44, S.D. = 2.32 respectively). For the "Competencies" scale, gender was also found to differentiate the scores for the Realistic [$t(268) = 10.11$, $p < 0.001$], Artistic [$t(268) = −4.27$, $p < 0.001$] and Social types [$t(265) = −2.53$, $p < 0.05$]. Boys indicated higher scores (M = 5.62, S.D. = 2.99) than girls (M = 2.47, S.D. = 2.09) for the Realistic type and lower scores for the Artistic (M = 4.72, S.D. = 2.68) and Social types (M = 7.28, S.D. = 2.46) than girls (M = 6.02, S.D. = 2.31 and M = 8.00, S.D. = 2.17 respectively). Likewise for the "Occupations" scale, gender was also found to differentiate the scores for the Realistic [$t(268) = 7.67$, $p < 0.001$], Artistic [$t(265) = −4.07$, $p < 0.001$] and Social types [$t(268) = −7.76$, $p < 0.001$]. Boys had higher scores (M = 3.25, S.D. = 3.02) than girls (M = 1.06, S.D. = 1.50) for the Realistic type and lower scores for the Artistic (M = 3.64, S.D. = 3.38) and Social types (M = 3.32, S.D. = 3.59) than girls (M = 5.43, S.D. = 3.75 and M = 6.81, S.D. = 3.75 respectively). Finally, for the "Self-estimates" scale, gender was found to differentiate the score in all types (R: [$t(267) = 8.80$, $p < 0.001$], I: [$t(268) = 2.86$, $p < 0.01$], A: [$t(267) = −2.49$, $p < 0.05$], S: [$t(268) = −4.89$, $p < 0.001$], E: [$t(268) = 2.10$, $p < 0.05$] and C: [$t(267) = −1.99$, $p < 0.05$]). Boys had higher scores in Realistic, Investigative, and Enterprising types, while girls scored higher in Artistic, Social and Conventional types.

T-Tests were performed to examine whether students' grade differentiates the scores for the RIASEC types. Students' grade did not differentiate the scores in any RIASEC type in almost all scales. The "Self-estimates" scale was the only scale where grade was found to differentiate the score in Conventional [$t(267) = −2.93$, $p < 0.01$], Investigative [$t(268) = 2.15$, $p < 0.05$], and Enterprising types [$t(268) = 2.07$, $p < 0.05$]. Tenth grade students had higher scores (C: M = 8.53, S.D. = 3.35, I: M = 7.97, S.D. = 3.80, E: M = 8.54, S.D. = 2.96) than their eleventh grade counter partners (C: M = 7.33, S.D. = 3.40, I: M = 6.97, S.D. = 3.77, E: M = 7.77, S.D. = 3.12).

T-Tests were also performed to examine whether students' place of residence differentiates the score for the RIASEC types. For the "Activities" scale, place of residence was found to differentiate the score in the Enterprising type [$t(262) = −2.18$, $p < 0.05$]. Students living in the city had lower scores (M = 5.34, S.D. = 3.13) than students residing in villages (M = 6.35, S.D. = 3.18). For the "Competencies" scale place of residence was found to differentiate the score in the Artistic type [$t(264) = 2.55$, $p < 0.05$]. Students living in the city had higher scores (M = 5.62, S.D. = 2.51) than students living in villages (M = 4.67, S.D. = 2.51). For the "Occupations" scale place of residence was found to differentiate the score for the Artistic type [$t(261) = 2.16$, $p < 0.05$] and for the Enterprising type [$t(263) = −2.07$, $p < 0.05$]. Students living in the city had higher scores for the Artistic type (M = 4.84, S.D. = 3.77) and lower scores for the Enterprising type (M = 4.15, S.D. = 3.61) than students living in villages (M = 3.67, S.D. = 3.18 and M = 5.28, S.D. = 3.97 respectively). Finally, for the "Self-estimates" scale, place of residence was found to differentiate the score in the Artistic type [$t(260) = 3.18$, $p < 0.01$]. Students living in the city had higher scores (M = 8.83, S.D. = 3.53) than students residing in villages (M = 7.23, S.D. = 2.92).

One-way ANOVAs were performed in order to examine whether the education level of students' parents differentiates the scores for the RIASEC types. It was found that the education level of both father and mother differentiate the score for the Investigative type in the "Activities" scale [Father: $F(3, 262) = 14.36$, $p < 0.001$ and

Mother: $F(3, 262) = 9.28$, $p < 0.001$], in the "Competencies" scale [Father: $F(3, 262) = 14.36$, $p < 0.001$ and Mother: $F(3, 263) = 9.87$, $p < 0.001$] and in the "Self-estimates" scale [Father: $F(3, 264) = 14.87$, $p < 0.001$ and Mother: $F(3, 265) = 16.62$, $p < 0.001$]. Post hoc tests with the Scheffé criterion showed that students whose parents have a University degree have higher scores than students whose parents have attended Elementary School/Junior High School or High School/Technical Education. No significant differences were identified for the "Occupations" scale.

3.2. Emotional Intelligence

Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations of the scores of students in the TEIQue-ASF. As indicated, the mean score is somewhat high. T-Test was performed to check for possible gender differences in the descriptive statistics, but no significant difference was found.

T-Tests were also performed to examine whether students' grade or place of residence differentiates the score in the questionnaire, but no significant difference were found among the groups.

One-way ANOVAs were conducted in order to examine whether the education level of the students' parents differentiates the score in the TEIQue-ASF. The findings demonstrated that the education level of the father differentiated the score on the questionnaire [$F(3, 255) = 4.48$, $p < 0.01$]. Post hoc tests with the Scheffé criterion showed that students whose parents have a University degree have higher scores (M = 5.09, S.D. = 0.64) than students whose parents have attended Elementary School/Junior High School (M = 4.76, S.D. = 0.63) or High School/Technical Education (M = 4.77, S.D. = 0.60). No significant differences were found based on mothers' education level.

3.3. Emotional Intelligence and Vocational Interests

To examine the relationship between RIASEC types and trait emotional intelligence, correlation coefficients were calculated. As shown in Table 4, trait emotional intelligence has a low but significant positive correlation (ranging from r = 0.14, $p < 0.05$ to r = 0.31, $p < 0.001$) with the Enterprising type in all scales.

Trait EI also demonstrated:
- a low but significant positive correlation with the Investigative type for the "Competencies" (r = 0.27, $p < 0.001$) and "Self-estimates" scales (r = 0.22, $p < 0.001$);
- a low but significant positive correlation with the Realistic type for the "Competencies" (r = 0.13, $p < 0.05$) and "Self-estimates" scales (r = 0.14, $p < 0.05$);
- a low but significant positive correlation with the Social type for the "Competencies" scale (r = 0.15, $p < 0.05$);
- a low but significant positive correlation with the Investigative type for the "Competencies" scale (r = 0.14, $p < 0.001$).

Table 3. T test and descriptive statistics in the TEIQue-ASF for male and female students.

Variables	Gender	Descriptive Statistics			T	df	p
		N	M.O.	T.A.			
TEIQue-ASF	Male	120	4.95	0.57	1.56	259	NS
	Female	141	4.82	0.69			
	Total	261	4.87	0.65			

Note. Min: 1, Max: 7.

Table 4. Correlation coefficients (Pearson r) between TEIQue-ASF and the scales and subscales of SDS.

Scale	R	I	A	S	E	C
Activities	0.02	0.07	−0.06	−0.08	**0.15**[*]	0.04
Competencies	**0.13**[*]	**0.27**[***]	0.05	**0.15**[*]	**0.31**[***]	**0.14**[*]
Occupations	−0.01	0.02	−0.04	−0.10	**0.14**[*]	0.07
Self-estimates	**0.14**[*]	**0.22**[***]	0.11	0.10	**0.20**[**]	0.04

[*]$p < 0.05$, [**]$p < 0.01$, [***]$p < 0.001$.

4. Discussion

The present study aimed at investigating the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and vocational interests, as measured in Holland's RIASEC theory. So far, the majority of research in this area has been conducted with adult samples (college students or older), and certain contradictions in the results were identified depending on the assessment instruments used. The findings of the current study contribute to the existing literature and challenge existing evidence. In particular, our sample was comprised of adolescents, as at this age students need to make one of their most significant career choices, to choose their major of study.

With regard to vocational interests, students demonstrated higher mean scores for the Social type in all SDS scales, followed by the Enterprising, the Investigative and the Artistic types with small deviations between them. The Conventional and Realistic types obtained the lowest scores. The low score for the Realistic type might be related to the sample's synthesis, as the research took place in the "General Lyceum" (Senior High School) that prepared students for entry to Universities, and not in Technical Lyceum that prepared students for technical occupations. As expected, boys scored higher in the Realistic type and girls scored higher in the Artistic and Social types. This finding is consistent with previous research (e.g. Puffer, 2011; Su et al., 2009). According to SDS professional user's guide (Holland, Powell, & Fritzsche, 1997), the significant differences in the Realistic and Social type reflect real and not illusory differences in the world of work.

School grade and family salary were found to have minor or no effects on scores, while parents' education level was found to be associated with the Investigative type in most SDS scales. This finding is also consistent with previous research (Holland et al., 1997), and is associated with the fact that most occupations of the Investigative type require attending University. Finally, place of residence was found to be weakly associated with the Artistic and the Enterprising type. Students that live in the city tended to score higher for the Artistic type, while students living in villages tended to score higher for the enterprising type. This might be associated to their greater exposure to relevant stimuli.

This study suggested that trait Emotional Intelligence levels were medium to high. The mean score was 4.87, while the lowest possible score was 1 and the highest 7. No demographic variables (gender, grade, place of residence, family salary) were found to have effects on scores. These findings are consistent with relevant literature. According to Goleman (1998) there are no sex differences in overall emotional intelligence, although there are differences in particular aspects of emotional intelligence. Other researchers have found that women score higher in some EI dimensions and men in others (Bar-On, 1997; Bar-On et al., 2000; Dawda & Hart, 2000; Petrides & Furnham, 2000). It should be noted that in some cases women were found to have higher scores in general (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003; Mayer & Geher, 1996; Mayer et al., 1999) but in these cases the assessment instrument has always been an ability-based test (Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test), and not a self-report questionnaire (e.g. Bar-On Emotion Quotient Inventory and Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test-SREIT).

The present study utilized a self-report assessment tool that measures only global trait emotional intelligence, and the absence of sex effects was to be expected (Sanchez-Ruiz et al., 2010). Father's educational level was the only demographic variable that had significant effects on trait EI levels. Students whose fathers were University graduates had higher scores than students whose fathers were graduates from a high School or Elementary School. This finding might be linked to the pedagogical methods that parents use.

The main aim of the present study was the investigation of the relationship between trait EI and RIASEC types. Previous research has shown positive correlations of Social type and EI (Caruso et al., 2002; Kafetsios et al., 2009; Puffer, 2011; Tombs, 2004), although in some studies this was identified for only some of EI dimensions. The hypothesis that EI would be found to be positively correlated with Social type was not supported. Only a very small positive correlation was found in just one of SDS scales. This finding highlights the necessity for further research in order to better understand the association between the Social type and EI. The hypothesis that EI would be positively correlated with the Artistic type was not supported either. No significant correlations were identified.

Moreover, the anticipated non-significant or negative correlations with the Investigative, Realistic and Conventional types were only partly confirmed. No negative correlations were found, while there were some very low significant positive correlations in some of the SDS scales. With regard to the Investigative type, other research indicates similar findings. Kafetsios et al. (2009) have identified that positive science students (a major close link to the Investigative type) achieved high scores in EI self-report assessment tools.

As expected the Enterprising type for all SDS scales was found to be positively correlated to trait EI (although the correlations were low). Goleman (2006) has labeled EI as "one of the most influential business ideas of the decade". Nevertheless, previous studies have shown contradicting results. Puffer (2011) and Caruso et al. (2002) have reported a negative correlation, while Tombs (2004) a positive one. It is plausible that these differences can be attributed to the different assessment methods.

The results of this study need to be considered in the light of certain limitations. Because of the correlational nature of the research questions and statistical procedures, no cause-effect conclusions about the variables of interest can be made. Another limitation is that all data were collected by self-report instruments. Generalizations of the findings are limited to the features of the sample. However, the EI and career development relationship must continue to remain an important research topic. Future research projects should include a number of other constructs, for example career adaptability, work values, and dysfunctional career thoughts. Longitudinal research designs could also contribute to the clarification of possible causal relationships between trait EI and the above constructs.

Implications for Research

While the present study provides interesting findings, there are several issues requiring further research. First, the lack of strong correlation between the Social type and Trait EI needs to be further explored. New researches should be conducted with the use of both trait and ability EI psychometric tools. Second, we suggest that future research focus on adults (and not adolescents) in order to examine whether our findings will be verified in other age groups as well. Third, future research should examine the possible effects of other variables (such as self-efficacy beliefs) in both vocational interests and trait EI.

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