

EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE AND FRIENDSHIP QUALITY AMONG STUDENTS

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Summary. Emotional competence (EC), understood as the ability to deal with emotional information, can be acquired and shaped over the course of life. Due to its specificity, it can play an important role with regard to creating and maintaining relationships with other people.

The main aim of the study was to verify the relationship between the level of EC and the friendship quality, taking into account the gender of the best friend. A total of 215 Polish university students participated, including 119 females and 96 males.

The Short Profile of Emotional Competence (S-PEC) was used to measure EC and the Friendship Intensity Measurement Scale (FIMS) was used to assess the quality of a friendship between a woman or a man.

Among participants, 58% identified a female friend as their best friend, while 42% identified a male friend, with same-sex friends being significantly more common. Women and men valued the relationship with a female friend similarly while regarding a male friend, a higher average relationship quality was presented by women compared to men.

A positive association was found between the overall level of EC and the quality of the friendship between a woman and a man. The quality of friendship with a woman was significantly and positively related to both the inter- and intrapersonal dimensions of EC. In contrast, in the case of a the quality of a friendly relationship with a man, a significant association was noted only for the EC interpersonal dimension.

Keywords: emotional competence, friendship quality, friendship, students, female friend, male friend, gender

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Introduction

Emotional Competence

Emotions are an important aspect of human life, constituting the basis of relationships with other people and having a significant impact on everyday activities. Dealing with emotional information is enabled by emotional intelligence (EI). Salovey and Mayer (1990, p. 189) define it as the “ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions”. They distinguished four main components of EI – the perception of emotions, the use of emotions in thinking, understanding emotions and managing emotions (Salovey, Mayer, 1997). Some models of EI take into account its division into interpersonal and intrapersonal (Bar-On, 1997; Weisinger, 1998). Intrapersonal EI involves understanding, expressing, regulating, and using one’s emotions, while interpersonal EI allows for these activities in relation to other people’s emotions (Brasseur et al., 2013). Therefore, interpersonal EI seems to condition the results of social interactions, e.g. by influencing the level of likeability assessed by peers (Szczygieł, Mikołajczak, 2018), while intrapersonal EI allows, among others, to maintain good mental health (Baudry et al., 2018).

In the study by Brasseur and colleagues (2013), instead of the term emotional intelligence, the term emotional competence (EC) is used. The basis of EC is skills that are learnable and can be developed throughout life. According to the authors, it is the possibility of change, including developing the level of emotional competence, that distinguishes it from EI. Anna Matczak and Katarzyna Knopp (2013) believe that distinguishing emotional abilities and competence may be difficult because their definitions overlap in many cases, and the boundary between competence (skills) and abilities remains fluid. In the literature on the subject, EC is described as behavioural manifestations of innate emotional abilities (Seal, Andrews-Brown, 2010), having a complex nature (Matczak, Knopp, 2013). According to Goleman (1999), competence constitutes a set of abilities used in practice. It may be difficult to determine when a given component is a single ability, e.g. expressing emotions, and when it turns into a skill, e.g. establishing social relationships (Matczak, Knopp, 2013). In addition, distinguishing both concepts from each other may be problematic also because they are considered in terms of the possibility or lack of possibility of their development. According to Knopp (2006), competencies can be shaped, and this process is influenced by environmental factors that are the source of experiences and individual characteristics that determine the intensity of these experiences and the way they are used. In understanding emotional intelligence, its cognitive and skill-based nature is largely emphasized (Goleman, 1999), which suggests the inability to develop it (Brasseur et al., 2013). However, researchers do not agree on this, and some of them (e.g. Scherer, 2007) support the superiority of the concept of emotional competence over emotional intelligence.

Friendship and the quality of the friendly relationship

As claimed by Argyle (1999), we have symmetrical and equal relationships with friends. These are people we like and can trust, and we feel happy in their company. Research by Argyle and Furnham (1982) showed that there are three main sources of satisfaction in friendship, which are: common interests, receiving social and emotional support, and obtaining instrumental rewards. Friendship is present in human life in almost all developmental periods, starting from childhood (Gutowska, 2011), and functioning in friendship promotes mental health (Szyszkowska, 1992) and personal and social well-being (Wojciechowska, 2016). It allows you to cope better with stress, determines one's good mood and protects him or her from loneliness which is often one of the causes of depression (Argyle, 1999). Narr and colleagues (2019) showed that the strength of a friendship in adolescence translates into better functioning in early adulthood, especially in terms of self-esteem and lower levels of anxiety and depression symptoms. Results from a longitudinal study conducted by Miething et al. (2016) regarding the quality of the friendship network and well-being at the age of 18 and 23 confirm that they remain in a significant relationship with each other, but the strength of this relationship decreases over time.

McPherson et al. (2001) using the term homophily indicate that in the case of, among others, interpersonal relationships, we are closer to people who are similar to ourselves. Various types of similarities between people, e.g. in terms of sociodemographic variables or academic achievements, turn out to determine interest in a given interpersonal relationship (Kubitschek and Hallinan, 1998). Similarity is a predictor of establishing a friendly relationship (Newcomb, 1961). Research data show that we are more likely to be friends with someone of the same sex. For example, in Machin and Dunbar's (2013) study, the proportion of people who were friends with a person of the same sex vs. a person of the other sex was 81.5% vs. 18.5%. Similar results appeared in Gutowska's (2013) study, in which the choice of friend was a representative of the same sex, especially in the case of the closest friends.

Women and men differ from each other in terms of interpersonal relationships, including functioning in friendships. Cross-gender friendship provides numerous benefits, such as an "inside perspective" of the opposite sex and the opportunity to better understand their behaviour (Monsour, 2002). However, it is characterized by different regularities than same-sex friendships. Among men, a friendship focuses on joint activities and is less intimate, while among women it is associated with openness and readiness to confide in others (Gutowska, 2013; Skrocka, 2015). In a study conducted by Kito (2005) on an American and Japanese sample, subjects shared less information about themselves in friendships between men and women than in same-sex relationships.

There are differences between women and men when it comes to assessing the friendship quality. Teenage girls rate the quality of their friendships higher (Humenny et al., 2018). Similar patterns, but among adults, were noted by Prusiński (2016a), and

in his study, women rated their friendship relationships higher than men, regardless of the friend's gender. It should be mentioned that in this study, in the group of women, there was a significant difference in the friendship quality, regarding a higher assessment of the relationship with a female friend than with a male friend. In other research by the same author, differences were revealed only in the assessment of the relationship with a male friend, the quality of which was rated higher by women compared to men (Prusiński, 2016b), similarly to Watson (2012). However, Elkins and Peterson (1993) in their study among students showed that women and men evaluate their relationship with a female friend similarly, while men evaluate the quality of their relationship with a friend of the same sex lower.

Emotional competence and friendship quality

Understanding the feelings experienced by oneself and others, coping with them and controlling them influences a person's functioning in interpersonal relationships (Brasseur et al., 2013; Petrovici, Dobrescu, 2014). Creating close relationships and functioning in them is associated in the literature with EI (Goleman, 1997; Prusiński, 2016b; Simmons, Simmons, 2001), which is an important variable in relation to the friendship quality (Prusiński, 2016b).

In friendship, providing support plays an important role, which is possible, among others, by expressing emotions (Gutowska, 2011) and requires the individual to use interpersonal emotional competence (Bayot et al., 2021). Research shows that better perception and management of emotions are positively related to the intensity and satisfaction with received social support (Chiarrochi et al., 2001). Moreover, people with higher EI are more satisfied with their relationships with others (Lopes et al., 2004). They also show pro-social attitudes more often and are liked in peer groups (Szczygieł, Mikolajczak, 2018). In Prusiński's (2016b) study, which included EI, the quality of the friendly relationship, regardless of the friend's gender, was significantly and positively related to the overall EI score. The subscales of the tool measuring EI that were significantly related to the quality of friendship in all but one case were the *Acceptance* scale (expressing and using one's own emotions) and the *Empathy* scale, referring to the interpersonal dimension of EI. In other research conducted by Prusiński (2017), mainly in the group of young adults, it was noted that social competencies related to the effectiveness of behaviour in intimate situations were significantly positively correlated with the quality of the friendly relationship only among the surveyed men, regardless of whether they assessed their relationship with a friend of the same or opposite sex.

Based on the presented regularities in research on EC, as well as those related to friendship and the quality of friendly relationships, the purpose of the research was determined, which included the analysis of the friendship quality, taking into account one's gender and that of the best friend, but above all, the verification of

the relationship between EC and the quality of friendship. The following research questions were formulated:

- Q1. *Does the choice of a best friend (female or male) depend on one's gender?*
- Q2. *Is gender a factor differentiating the assessment of friendship quality?*
- Q3. *Does EC have a significant connection with the quality of the friendly relationship?*

The following hypotheses were formulated for the presented research problems, based on the literature on the subject and the results of previous research:

- H1. The choice of a best friend (taking into account his or her gender) depends on one's gender.
- H2. Women rate the quality of their friendship with a woman higher than men who are friends with a woman.
- H3. Women rate the quality of their friendship with a man higher than men who are friends with a man.
- H4. The level of EC is positively related to the assessment of friendship quality.

Method

Subjects of the study

The study involved students of Polish universities ($N = 215$), 119 women (55.3%) and 96 men (44.7%) aged 18 to 30 ($M = 20.9$; $SD = 2.1$). More than half of the participants (53%) were students of the first year of studies, the smallest group (8 people, 3.7%) were students of the fifth or second year of second-cycle studies.

Research tools

a) Measuring the friendship quality

To measure the quality of friendship, the Friendship Intensity Measurement Scale (FIMS) by T. Arunkumar and B. Dharmangadan (2001) was used, in the Polish adaptation by T. Prusiński (2019), who also prepared its revised version (shorter than the original one), used in our study. The revised version includes two forms of the questionnaire: FIMS/MF, consisting of 17 statements (intended to assess a friendly relationship with a man) and FIMS/WF, which includes 13 items regarding a friendly relationship with a woman. Answers are given on a five-point Likert scale (1 – *I strongly disagree*; 5 – *I strongly agree*).

The FIMS/WF consists of four subscales described by Prusiński (2019): *support received* (SR) recognized as a component related primarily to help from a friend and used to receive support in various areas of functioning; *pleasure* (P) associated with positive emotions arising from a relationship with a friend; *support given* (SG) is associated with providing support and help to a friend; *confiding* (C) concerns sharing, among others, deep experiences. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the

entire FIMS/WF scale was .57, and for the subscales it ranged from .39 to .60. The presented values are unsatisfactory. Therefore, a decision was made to treat the scale as a whole, without dividing it into subscales, and to analyze which items could be excluded from the analysis to improve the value of the reliability coefficient. After excluding two items, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for 11 items was .67. The indicator created in this way was used in the target analyses of this study.

The FIMS/MF also consists of four subscales: *support given* (SG) – as in the case of a relationship with a female friend, it concerns providing support and help, but to a male friend; *alignment* (A) includes, among others: a sense of freedom and unrestrained relationship with a friend; *confiding* (C) is associated with, among others, confide a secret to a friend, and the last subscale of *vitality* (V) is manifested, among others, by accepting a friend as he or she is. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the entire scale was .80, and for the individual subscales it was as follows: SG, $\alpha = .71$; A, $\alpha = .74$; C, $\alpha = .78$ and V, $\alpha = .43$. Due to the low-reliability coefficient for the Vitality scale, a decision was made not to use this subscale in the target analyses.

b) **Emotional competence (EC)**

The level of emotional competence was examined using the Short Profile of Emotional Competence (S-PEC) by Brasseur, Mikolajczak and Fantini-Hauwel (2014) in the Polish translation by D. Szczygieł (in preparation). The questionnaire consists of 20 items that concern the interpersonal (10 items) and intrapersonal (10 items) dimensions of EC. S-PEC therefore refers not only to the ability to regulate, understand, use, express and recognize one's own emotions, but also the emotions of other people. The respondent answers on a scale from 1 (the statement does not describe me at all or I never experience the described situation) to 5 (the statement describes me very well or I experience the described situation very often). The higher the result, the higher the subject's EC level. In the presented measurement, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the entire S-PEC scale was .76, and for the subscales: interpersonal $\alpha = .72$, intrapersonal $\alpha = .66$. It was checked whether the intrapersonal subscale contains items which excluded from the analysis would increase the level of reliability. One item was identified, after exclusion of which the subscale had a higher than the initial Cronbach's alpha value of .71. Therefore, the target analyses were conducted using 19 items ($\alpha = .78$) for the general level of emotional competence and 10 for the interpersonal subscale and 9 for the intrapersonal subscale.

c) **Sociodemographic data**

The survey collected information on gender, age, year of study and field of study.

Research procedure

The study was conducted online in April 2023. A link to the Google Form was sent via Messenger and the Facebook social media platform. The information the respondents received before participating in the study included: the purpose of the

study, its approximate duration, conditions of participation – voluntary participation and the possibility of resigning at any time, anonymity, confidentiality of data and the purpose of its use. Completing the substantive part of the study form was treated as consent to participate in the study. In the section of the form regarding the assessment of the quality of a friendship relationship, the respondent was asked to indicate whether his or her best friend was a woman or a man and then completed one of the versions according to the answer. The study did not control how many people interrupted the study, and only completed forms were analyzed because the Google tool requires the participant to press the “Send” button to save data, otherwise the data is not saved in the general results database.

Data analysis methods

Statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 29. The chi-square test verified the relationship between one’s gender and the gender of the best friend. Differences in means between women and men were compared using the Student’s t-test and the Mann-Whitney U test. The relationship between EC and friendship quality was verified using the Pearson r and Spearman rho correlation coefficient. The effect size for the correlation coefficient was determined according to Cohen’s (1992) suggestions: small: .1 to .3; medium: .3 to .5; large: .5 and higher.

Results

The description of the results starts with information related to the best friend’s gender declaration, which determined the completed version of the FIMS tool. Among all respondents, 58% indicated a woman as their best friend, and 42% a man. If the gender of the study participant is taken into account, men declared that they had a male friend more often than women (63.5% vs. 36.5%). Among women, the proportion was the opposite: 75.6% of the surveyed women declared another woman as their best friend, and 24.5% declared that they were male friends. The result of the chi-square test of independence was statistically significant ($X^2 = 33.5$; $p < .001$; $V = .40$), therefore the variables of own gender and best friend’s gender are related (hypothesis 1).

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the variables included in the study. The skewness and kurtosis values of virtually all variables were within the range of ± 1 . The only exception was the FIMS/MF *Alignment* subscale, in which the results for both women and men differed from the normal distribution. The average results of women and men in terms of EC and friendship quality were compared. There were no significant gender differences in the level of EC. When it comes to assessing the quality of a friendly relationship, both genders value friendship with a woman to a similar extent (hypothesis 2 was not confirmed). However, women, compared to men, value friendship with a man more highly (confirmation for hypothesis 3).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for emotional competence and the friendship quality (with a male and female friend) – data for the entire sample and comparison of means according to the gender of the respondent

Gender	Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis	<i>t</i>
M	S-PEC general	96	66.40	9.73	.09	-.86	1.62
F		119	64.32	9.03	-.05	-.04	
Total		215	65.25	9.38	.04	-.59	
M	S-PEC (inter)	96	36.03	5.91	-.11	-.37	1.21
F		119	35.11	5.26	.04	-.35	
Total		215	35.52	5.57	-.01	-.37	
M	S-PEC (intra)	96	30.37	6.01	-.09	-.09	1.46
FW		119	29.21	5.56	-.08	-.77	
Total		215	29.73	5.78	-.06	-.42	
M	FIMS/WF general	35	43.89	5.46	.02	-.45	1.00
F		90	42.76	5.71	-.70	.69	
Total		125	43.07	5.64	-.53	.50	
M	FIMS/MF general	61	61.11	8.52	-.57	1.45	-4.53***
F		29	69.31	6.80	-.18	-.66	
Total		90	63.76	8.85	-.51	.98	
M	FIMS/MF (Support given)	61	16.28	3.46	-.16	-.33	-4.71***
F		29	19.86	3.19	-.11	.03	
Total		90	17.43	3.75	-.12	-.22	
M	FIMS/MF (Alignment)	61	23.30	2.22	-2.12	6.63	1.65 (Z)
F		29	23.90	1.74	-.41	.60	
Total		90	23.49	2.08	-2.03	6.14	
M	FIMS/MF (Confiding)	61	7.31	3.07	.50	-.52	-4.62***
F		29	10.55	3.19	-.23	-1.09	
Total		90	8.36	3.45	.28	-.93	

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; Z – standardized Mann-Whitney U test statistic

Annotation: S-PEC general – overall result in the tool for measuring emotional competence; S-PEC (inter) – score on the subscale of the S-PEC tool regarding interpersonal aspects; S-PEC (intra) – score on the subscale of the S-PEC tool regarding intrapersonal aspects; FIMS/WF general – general result of measuring the friendship quality – version for a relationship with a female best friend; FIMS/MF general – general result of measuring the friendship quality – version for a relationship with a male best friend.

The next activity that was conducted was a correlation analysis including verification of the relationship between emotional competence and the quality of the friendly relationship (Table 2).

Table 2. The result of the correlation analysis using the r-Pearson and rho-Spearman coefficients regarding the relationship between emotional competence and friendship quality

n	Friendship quality	Emotional competence		
		S-PEC general	S-PEC (inter)	S-PEC (intra)
125	FIMS/WF general	.36**	.27**	.34**
90	FIMS/MF general	.32**	.36**	.16
90	FIMS/MF (Support given)	.27*	.34**	.10
90	FIMS/MF (Alignment)	.17	.22*	.06
90	FIMS/MF (Confiding)	.16	.17	.10

** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Annotation: S-PEC general – overall result – overall result in the tool for measuring emotional competence; S-PEC (inter) – score on the subscale of the S-PEC tool regarding interpersonal aspects; S-PEC (intra) – score on the subscale of the S-PEC tool regarding intrapersonal aspects; FIMS/WF general – general result of measuring the friendship quality – version for a relationship with a female best friend; FIMS/MF general – general result of measuring the friendship quality – version for a relationship with a male best friend.

The result of the correlation analysis confirms hypothesis 4, which assumes a positive relationship between the level of EC and the friendship quality. A higher level of EC, expressed in the overall score on the S-PEC scale and divided into dimensions – inter and intrapersonal, is positively associated with the quality of a friendly relationship with a female friend (small and medium effect size). In the case of study participants who indicated a man as their best friend (data for the FIMS/MF version of the questionnaire), a significant positive correlation (small and medium effect size) occurs between the quality of the friendly relationship with a male friend (determined by the overall result) and the level of EC (the overall result and in the interpersonal subdimension). Higher EC scores (included in the overall score and the interpersonal dimension subscale) are accompanied by a higher level of support given (*Support Given*). Within the *Alignment* subscale (FIMS/MF subscale), a significant relationship occurred only with the interpersonal subdimension of EC (small effect size). There were no significant correlations between the level of EC and the FIMS/MF *Confiding* subscale.

Discussion

In own study, women more often indicated another woman as their best friend, and men indicated another man as their best friend. Similar regularities occurred in the research of Gutowska (2013) or Machin and Dunbar (2013). The obtained proportions can be related to the phenomenon of homophily (McPherson et al., 2001), where it is indicated that people are connected by similarities. Friendship between men focuses on joint activities (Gutowska, 2013; Skrocka, 2015), which serve to satisfy needs and may involve their fulfillment only within the same gender (e.g. a way of spending time). However, in relationships between women, there is openness and readiness to confide (Gutowska, 2013; Skrocka, 2015), so a friendly relationship serves mainly to satisfy emotional needs that seem more achievable in a relationship with another woman.

With regard to friendship quality and gender differences, taking into account the gender of the best friend, no differences were noted among people who were friends with a woman due to the gender of the evaluator. This result is consistent with the results of research by Prusiński (2016a) and Elkins and Peterson (1993). Perhaps relationships created with women due to their specificity, i.e. characterized by a higher level of support, are more satisfying for the partners of such a relationship. However, differences emerged in the relationship with a man, where women rated it higher than men. Similar data were obtained by Prusiński (2016a), Watson (2012) and Elkins and Peterson (1993). The obtained result can be explained by the fact that women generally value their friendships more highly than men, which was also revealed in Prusiński's (2016a) study. The way men perceive a friendship relationship may also play a role here, which, although scored lower, does not necessarily equate to dissatisfaction with it.

The main hypothesis tested in own study concerned the positive relationship between the level of EC and the friendship quality. EC correlated significantly positively with the quality of friendship with both a female friend and a male friend. This result is consistent with the data presented by Prusiński (2016b) and Gündüz (2019), who also conducted their research among young adults, including students, with the difference that the quality of the friendly relationship was in both cases correlated with emotional intelligence. It should be noted, however, that in the case of Prusiński's (2016b) research, correlations were made taking into account the participants' gender, and in Gündüz's (2019) study, unfortunately, they were not. The correlation coefficients obtained by the mentioned researchers were lower than those recorded in the study. The differences may result from different constructs used in the research – in Prusiński (2016b) and Gündüz (2019), the measurement included emotional intelligence, and in our study, it was emotional competence, recognized as individual properties that can be developed.

Variation in results was noted in relation to the EC relationship and the quality of the friendly relationship with a male friend. The result that occurred to be

statistically significant was a positive correlation between EC (general result and interpersonal aspect) and Support given to a male friend. The obtained result may be related to the characteristics of interpersonal emotional competence. They allow us to identify and understand other people's emotional states (Brasseur et al., 2013), which makes it easier to read the other person's needs and expectations regarding functioning in a friendly relationship. Accurately identifying a friend's expectations may be the first step to planning remedial actions and providing effective support and help in difficult situations. In Prusiński's (2016b) study, the *Support* scale regarding the quality of the friendly relationship correlated significantly with the level of EI (overall result) only among women, while among men the correlation occurred only between *Support* and *Empathy*. The *Support* subscale correlated significantly with the general level of social competencies only in the group of men who were friends with a man in another study by Prusiński (2017), but the correlation coefficients were low.

Another statistically significant result was a positive relationship between EC (interpersonal aspect) and *Alignment* in a relationship with a male friend. Alignment is understood as a sense of freedom and an unrestrained relationship with a friend (Prusiński, 2019). The obtained result is identical to the results obtained by Prusiński (2016b, 2017), where *Alignment* was significantly related to the level of EI among men and with the general level of social competencies among both genders. Therefore, understanding the emotional states of other people seems to be particularly important for fluidity and freedom in a friendly relationship (components of *Alignment*).

In own study, the relationship between the intrapersonal aspect of EC and the overall result of the quality of a friendly relationship with a man and the subscales *Support given*, *Alignment* and *Confiding* proved to be insignificant. This is a different result from the result obtained in the case of respondents who were friends with a woman. According to Brasseur and colleagues (2013), the contribution of interpersonal and intrapersonal EC in different spheres of life is different. The intrapersonal aspect plays an important role, e.g. in predicting health status, while the interpersonal component mainly determines the quality of relationships with others (Brasseur et al., 2013). Moreover, research conducted by Martinez-Pons (1997) in a group of adolescents showed that the interpersonal aspect of EI was a predictor of the quality of social interactions, while intrapersonal EI correlated with task orientation and the desire for personal development. Perhaps that is why among people who were friends with a man, intrapersonal ECs were not important for the subjective assessment of the quality of the relationship.

The correlation between *Confiding* and EC proved to be insignificant in the case of respondents who were friends with a man. Perhaps this is due to the specificity of friendship with a man, in which closeness is understood differently than in the case of women, and sharing personal information occurs less frequently than in friendship relationships between women themselves (Kito, 2005).

Limitations of Own Study

The presented study is not free from limitations. EC was measured using the S-PEC tool, which is still in the testing phase in Poland. It is necessary to further monitor the psychometric properties of this scale, as well as population studies using it, to make it possible to normalize it. In terms of assessing the quality of friendship, a solution was used in which the respondent had to indicate one person as his or her best friend – regardless of his or her gender, which is different from the solutions used, among others, by Prusiński (2016a, 2016b, 2017), in which the research participant assessed the quality of the relationship with their female friend and male friend. In own study, due to the too-small sample size, the division into four groups was abandoned based on one's gender and the gender of a friend. In subsequent activities, the use of such a procedure would allow for more precise analyses and comparisons with the results of other studies. Analyses regarding the reliability of the version of the FIMS scale designed to assess the friendly relationship quality with a female friend revealed some difficulties resulting in a reduction in the number of items and the inability to use the subscales of this tool. Given this situation, it seems reasonable to further monitor the properties of this tool. Apart from the size of the sample, its sociodemographic characteristics should also be treated as a limitation, which, apart from students, should also include people of similar age but who are not students.

Conclusions

Scientific research conducted so far on the issue of emotional competence indicates that it is connected with the mental and physical well-being of an individual, professional success, but also with functioning in social relationships (Brasseur et al., 2013). An example of such a special relationship is friendship, which provides the individual with a good mood and is a protective factor against loneliness (Argyle, 1999).

In the era of social changes resulting from the technological revolution and changes in the way people communicate, the issue of emotional competence and friendship seems to have acquired a new meaning.

The positive correlation obtained in own study between EC and the friendship quality of woman and man can generally be treated as a desirable relationship in which people, who understand their own emotions and can manage the emotions of other people and respond to them appropriately, can take better care of the relationship with friend, which in turn may benefit both parties of the interaction. However, it should be noted that the value of the obtained correlation coefficients was low or average, which may suggest that aspects related to emotional competence and the relationship between friends are a much more complicated issue.

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KOMPETENCJA EMOCJONALNA A JAKOŚĆ RELACJI PRZYJACIELSKIEJ WŚRÓD STUDENTÓW

Streszczenie. Kompetencja emocjonalna (KE), rozumiana jako umiejętność radzenia sobie z informacjami emocjonalnymi, jest możliwa do nabycia i kształtowania

w biegu życia. Ze względu na swoją specyfikę może odgrywać istotną rolę w odniesieniu do tworzenia i podtrzymywania relacji z innymi osobami.

Celem głównym badania była weryfikacja związku między poziomem KE a jakością relacji przyjacielskiej z uwzględnieniem płci najlepszego przyjaciela. Wzięło w nim udział 215 studentów polskich uczelni, w tym 119 kobiet i 96 mężczyzn. Do pomiaru KE wykorzystano *Profil Kompetencji Emocjonalnej* w wersji skróconej (S-PEC), a do oceny jakości relacji przyjacielskiej z kobietą lub mężczyzną *Kwestionariusz Intensywności Relacji Przyjacielskiej* (FIMS).

Wśród uczestników 58% jako najlepszego przyjaciela wskazało kobietę, zaś 42% mężczyznę, przy czym istotnie częściej przyjacielem była osoba tej samej płci. Kobiety i mężczyźni podobnie cenili sobie relację z przyjaciółką kobietą, natomiast w odniesieniu do przyjaciela mężczyzny wyższą średnią jakość relacji prezentowały kobiety w porównaniu z mężczyznami. Wykazano dodatni związek między ogólnym poziomem KE a jakością relacji przyjacielskiej z kobietą oraz z mężczyzną. Jakość relacji przyjacielskiej z kobietą była istotnie dodatnio powiązana z wymiarem inter- jak i intrapersonalnym KE. Natomiast w przypadku relacji przyjacielskiej z mężczyzną istotny związek odnotowano wyłącznie w odniesieniu do podskali KE dotyczącej aspektu interpersonalnego.

Słowa kluczowe: kompetencja emocjonalna, jakość relacji przyjacielskiej, przyjaźń, przyjaciel kobieta, przyjaciel mężczyzna, płeć

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