

## WHAT TRAITS MAKE CITIZENS REALLY ACTIVE? CITIZENS' TRAIT EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ITS RELATION TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND TOURISM IN A HISTORIC TOWN OF VESZPRÉM

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### **Abstract:**

725 inhabitants' trait emotional intelligence and its relation to community involvement, labour market status and gender have been studied in a Hungarian historic town (population circa 63.000) as part of a tourism destination project with the support of the local government. The research also explores the reasons why citizens chose Veszprém to settle down.

Regarding the research method a firmly reliable and internationally used TEIQue (Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire) has been applied. The results show that locals have average global emotional intelligence level with high *Well-being* (including optimism, happiness and self-esteem facets) and *Emotionality* (including relationship, empathy, emotion expression and emotion perception facets) average. Citizens who active members of a local community (e.g. museum-, sport-, environment protection club or association) have gained higher global emotional intelligence average compared to those who are not members. Those locals who have active working status and members of any local community have the highest emotional intelligence average globally and also on factor levels (*Well-being*, *Emotionality*, *Sociability* and *Self-Control*). There is a difference in gender: although men and women global emotional intelligence level is similar, women average scores are higher in *Well-being* and *Emotionality* while men's in *Sociability* and *Self-Control*. They also differ in giving reasons to choose Veszprém as a hometown. While men rather settle down for work and family reasons women's decision is influenced by falling love into the town and surroundings and the school years they have spent locally.

The primary aim of the study was to see what makes people stay in and do something for a place, how their traits influence local community work and how receptive locals can be towards tourists. The study findings suggest that mainly optimism, self-esteem, happiness, empathy, the ability of starting and maintaining a relationship and impulse control are the emotional traits that make an active local patriot who care to create a continuously prosperous environment.

*Keywords: locals' trait emotional intelligence, local communities, traits determine active citizenship*

## 1. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

### 1.1. What is emotional intelligence?

Emotional intelligence has been studied from different perspectives. Daniel Goleman's (1996) work on emotional intelligence hit a sensitive and thought provoking area that slowly but firmly has influenced even the most 'down-to-earth' economies ever since. Salovey and Mayer (1990, p.189) were the first to define emotional intelligence as such. Their initial definition of emotional intelligence 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 action" was later modified to "the ability to perceive emotion, integrate emotion to facilitate thought, understand emotions and to regulate emotions to promote personal growth" (Mayer & Salovey 1997, p.10). Bar-On (2000; 2006) combined previous approaches and used the concept of emotional-social intelligence to define skills, competencies, and facilitators and verify human behaviour. Emotional intelligence also bonds numerous fields of psychological science, such as human cognitive abilities, self regulation theory, or neuroscience of emotion (Zeidner et al, 2004).

At the turn of the Twenty-first Century, to diminish misconceptions and clarify the various theoretical distinctions, Petrides and Furnham (2001) examined the state of play of emotional intelligence theories and measurements. According to Pérez-González, Petrides, and Furnham (2005), there is a clear conceptual distinction between ability emotional intelligence (or cognitive-emotional ability) and trait emotional intelligence (or emotional self-efficacy). The former concerns emotion-related cognitive abilities, and is measured with the aid of maximum-performance tests. The latter concerns emotion-related behavioural characteristics, and is measured with the aid of self-reports (Petrides 2009). "Trait emotional intelligence is a distinct, compound trait located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies" (Petrides, Pérez-González, & Furnham 2007, p.26). In other words, trait emotional intelligence is a collection of emotion-related self-perceptions—an individual's confidence in her or his capability to perform various tasks which, according to Mikolajczak et al. (2007), correlates negatively with the individual's IQ. In terms of structure, only TEIQue, TEII<sup>1</sup>, WLEIS<sup>2</sup>, and TMMS<sup>3</sup> had clearly distinguishable factors, and, with the exception of TMMS, could provide global scores.

### 1.2. Emotional intelligence measurements

Various emotional intelligence measurements were developed, based be it on firm or on vague theoretical backgrounds, including with regards to measurement aspects such as reliability, validity, and factor structure (Petrides 2011). The minimum Cronbach alpha for reliability for individual testing is 0.80, according to Anastasi and Urbina (1997). Of the 14 tests investigated by Pérez-González, Petrides, and Furnham (2005), only three fulfilled Anastasi and Urbina's (1997) minimum reliability requirement—EQ-i (0.85), SUEIT (0.85), and TEIQue (0.90). In addition, TEIQue had the highest convergent and discriminant validity, as well as the highest correlation with the Giant Three (extraversion, neuroticism, and psychometrics) and Big Five (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) dimensions of human personality. The convergent and discriminant validities of the trait emotional intelligence tests investigated are unclear, low, or moderate, with EQ-i and TEIQue showing high correlations with the Big Five personality dimensions.

## 2. EXPLORING LOCALS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR TOURISM MARKETING, WELFARE AND WELL-BEING PURPOSES

Tourism is a key component of the service economy—in Hungary, it makes a direct contribution to the national economy of 4.6 per cent of GDP and an indirect contribution of 12 per cent (Hungarian Tourism Board 2011). According to the ITB *World Travel Trends Report* (2010), more than 800 million people travel every year, making the tourism sector one of the leading employers and providing a job to every 12<sup>th</sup> person—in Hungary, 6.2 per cent of the working population are employed directly in the tourism sector and 5.1 per cent are employed indirectly (Hungarian Tourism Board 2011).

<sup>1</sup> Tapia Emotional Intelligence Inventory.

<sup>2</sup> Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scales.

<sup>3</sup> Trait Meta Mood Scale.

Destination tourism is a segment what Bierman (2003, p.2) defines as “a country, state, region, city or town which is marketed or markets itself as a place for tourists to visit”. Veszprém is a historic town with circa 63.000 inhabitants which history trades back more than a thousand year. The place is called ‘Queens Town’ as Hungary’s first queen, the Bavarian Gizella, was crowned here and she with King Stephen I. founded Veszprém Bishopric as a pledge to the Catholic Church. The town’s geographic advantage is the fact that it is situated between Lake Balaton (the largest freshwater lake in Central Europe) and Bakony mountain range (110 km long).

Today Veszprém hosts many international events and festivals, economically can boast to have numerous international companies who settled down for a long term and to have the largest university in the region with five faculties. Therefore economically the potentials are three-folded:

- expand the 1-day visits
- invite more investors
- provide quality international tertiary education

All of these will generate more income for Veszprém and raise living standard, welfare and well-being of the locals.

## 2.1. The purpose of the research

The Veszprém Tourism Board and the Local Government approached to have a mutual survey which would reveal the feelings of the local people in order to know why individuals settle down here and to help developing the town’s future tourism and investor marketing. Also among the aims was to see the attitude and feeling of the people in today’s economic difficulties and role of the various Veszprém civil organisations, association and clubs in citizens’ lives.

### *The method of the research*

TEIQue, Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire was applied in this research based on its psychological theory and the ensuing nearly ten years of programmatic research. The long form (153 items) of the adult test (TEIQue 1.5) started to be developed in 1998 and underwent several revisions until finalised in 2001. The short form (30 out of 153 items, methodologically selected) of the adult test (TEIQue 1.5SF) was validated in 2010. The model covers 15 facets (*‘optimism’, ‘happiness’, ‘self-esteem’, ‘emotional management’, ‘assertiveness’, ‘social awareness’, ‘relationships’, ‘emotional expression’, ‘emotional perception’, ‘empathy’, ‘stress management’, ‘impulsiveness’, ‘emotional regulation’, ‘self-motivation’, and ‘adaptability’*) in the construct’s sampling domain, each item belonging to one facet only (Petrides, 2009). The positive and negative items counterbalance one another within and among the 15 facets, as well as within and among the four factors (*‘wellbeing’, ‘self-control’, ‘emotionality’, and ‘sociability’*) plus one (containing two auxiliary facets, ‘self motivation’ and ‘adaptability’, which add up to the Global TEIQue scores) and within and among global traits. Although it is a self-report it is not self-evaluated. Assessment and score calculation is carried out by expert and test developers.

By 2012, TEIQue had been translated into 17 languages. Its Hungarian adaptation (Kömlösi and Göndör 2011; 2013) and validation process started in 2011, on university students. The test has been already applied in Hungarian to middle managers in production firms (Kömlösi&Göndör, 2011, Kömlösi, 2012,). TEIQue is a self-report test designed to be factor analysed at the facet level on a 7-point Likert scale, argued to be the best for maximisation of reliability, including by comparison with the 5-point alternative (Coelho and Esteves 2007).

### *Data collection*

The questionnaire was sent out both online (using LimeSurvey) and paper to Veszprém public and private institutions, corporations, civil organisations etc. The questionnaire was available between 1 March-29 July 2012. The online link also appeared in the local website (Tourism Board, Local Government and the University of Pannonia, Faculty of Business and Economics etc.) and newspapers.

## 2.2. The results of the research

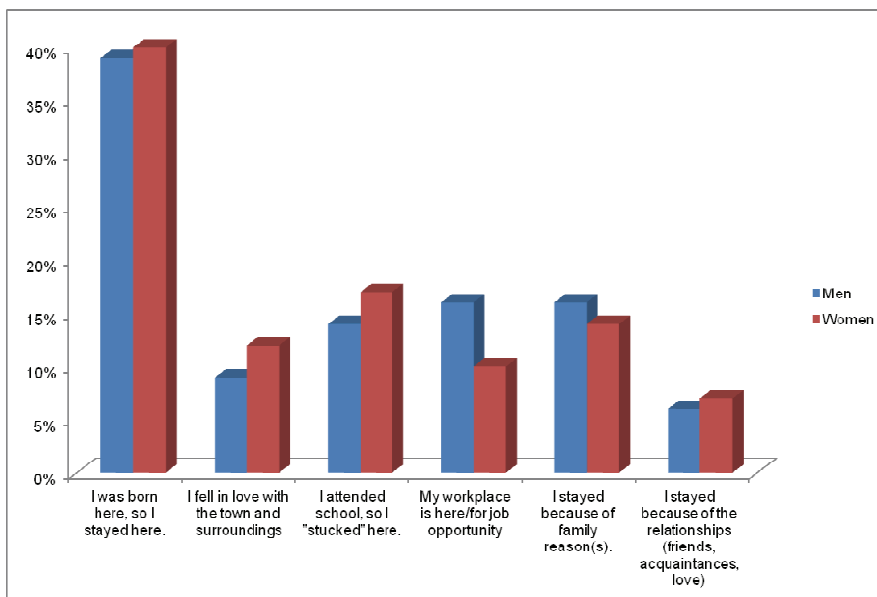
725 of the incoming 747 questionnaires were analysable. Regarding the gender 65% female and 35% male (women 10% overrepresented, men 10% underrepresented according to Veszprém

demographic) completed the survey most of which were between the age of 26-64 that was representative according to the ratio of this age of the locals (18-24 age group was 22% over- and 65+ age group 12% underrepresented in the survey according to the Veszprém statistics). The level of education reveals that Veszprém serves the title of university town. 45% of the responders have college or university degree, 25% high school degree, 16% higher education certificate, 3% completed only primary school and 11% have certificate from secondary vocational school. According to the labour market status 60% of the responders are active workers, 19% are students (mainly university), 14% are pensioners, 3% are on maternity leave and 4% are unemployed which represents the town's labour market. To gain a valid result it was vital to include the length someone lives in a city. 73% of the locals live more than 10 years in Veszprém, 14% between 4-10 years, 9% between 1-3 years, 4% less than a year. Therefore the results shown can be generalised for locals who settled down permanently.

Both from economic and touristic point of view it is important to know one choice of a place to settle down. A great majority of people's (40%) main reason is to stay in the town where they were born, and also where their studied (16%). Probably it is evident that family reason (like come back to the roots, marriage) also an influencing factor (15%). What is an informing data to the local government, that the ratio of people who chose this town for home because they fell in love with the place (11%) is nearly the same as the ones who came because they found a job here (12%). Also there are locals (6%) who settled down because of love, friendship or acquiesce.

We were curious to examine whether there is a gender difference among the six reasons to settle down. The result shows (Diagram 1.) that while men decision is rather influenced by workplace/job opportunity and family reason(s) women are more influenced by their school attendance and the emotion of falling in love with the town and surroundings.

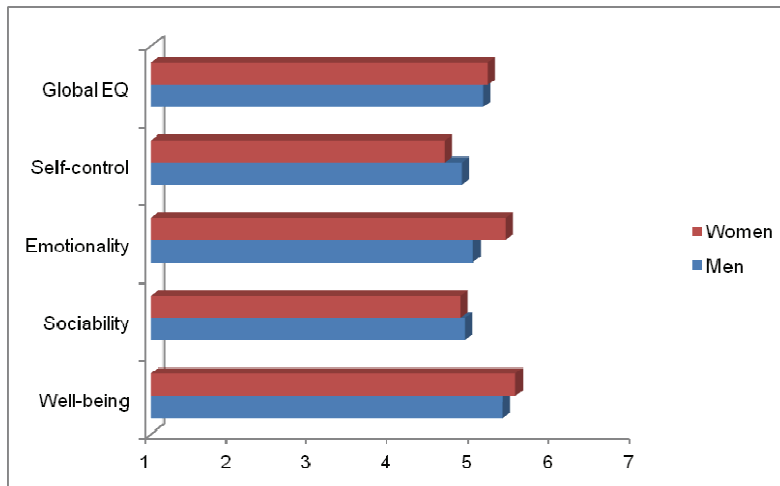
**Diagram 1:** Comparing women and men reasons to settle down in Veszprém



Could it mean that men decisions are influenced by practicality and security and women tend to listen to their intuition and feelings? When looking at the results of emotional intelligence the research reveals that men and women global scores are somewhat alike, they fall in the average level (Diagram 2.). The main differences are rather at factorial level. Women score significantly higher than men at the *Emotionality* factor. It indicates that females have higher *empathy* level, in other words they can understand other people's needs and desires, and therefore more skilful in conversations and negotiations because they take others' viewpoint into accounts. Furthermore they score high in *relationships* which is about starting and maintaining emotional bonds with family and close friend that positively affect well-being and productivity. Women are more precise and clear about *emotional perception* and in communicating their feelings to others (*emotional expressions*). Veszprém ladies *Well-being* score is also higher than the gentlemen's; they expect positive things in life (*optimism*),

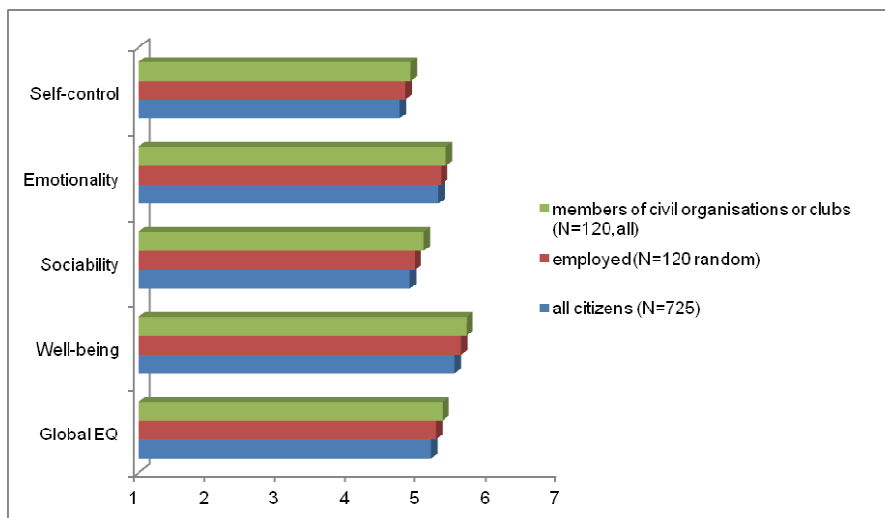
seem confident and satisfied with their achievements (*self-esteem*). On the other hand men score higher in *Self-control*. They can control emotions and feelings better, can change unpleasant mood more quickly and prolong pleasant mood (*emotional regulation*). Thinking before the action and decision making (*low impulsiveness*) and developing methods to cope with stress effectively are more likely with men (*stress management*).

**Diagram 2:** Women and men emotional intelligence level



One of the most interesting outcomes of the research is the difference between the emotional intelligence level of civil organisation members compared to locals and active labour. 120 out of the 725 respondents indicated that they are members of one or more of the sixty civil associations. Their level of emotional intelligence is contrasted to the randomly selected 120 employed who are not members. Members scored higher not just globally but at factorial level. Taking all respondents results into consideration both members and employed score higher (Diagram 3.).

**Diagram 3:** Comparing all citizens' with active labour and civil organisation members EQ level

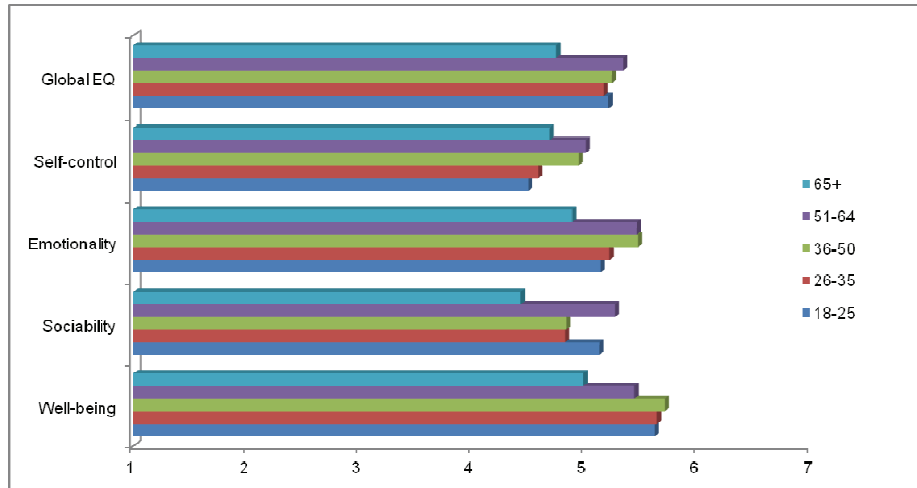


Previous research indicated (e.g. Petrides & Furnham, 2006; Komlósi & Göndör, 2011) that emotional intelligence shows correlation with age. Longitudinal studies indicated that as people get old they become better socialised and emotionally less unstable (Robins et al, 2001). The results of this study are some way diverse regarding age. At the global emotional intelligence level the 26-64 age range reflects the previous assumption: with age emotional intelligence level rises. However, there is a negative correlation regarding 65 and above and the people between the age of 18-25. At factorial level the results are more distinct. *Self-control* and *Emotionality* at some extent coincide with prior studies, with the exception of the 65 and above old people, age shows correlation. At *Well-being* factor similar coherence can be examined with the exception of the respondents of 51 and above. The most

out of the ordinary case is with the *Sociability* factor. The 51-64 and 18-25 age groups scores are outstanding compared to the other three age groups. It indicates that these two generations can influence other people feelings the most effectively. One of the explanations can be that the younger generation is frank and willing to stand up for their rights regardless of social rules, while 51-64 age generation already have the experience and social skills to influence other people (Diagram 4.). These generations also have extensive network systems: younger people nowadays use social media while the older generation already and still have 'flesh and blood' relationships.

Notwithstanding age groups are not represented accordingly the results should be taking into consideration and can be a foundation of further studies.

**Diagram 4:** EQ levels of the different age groups



### Discussion

The results indicate that those locals who are employed and members of any civil organisations have higher emotional intelligence level. The concept of being satisfied and motivated is explained by Maslow (1943) as the sense of belonging and self actualisation. In Veszprém where unemployment rate is 4% which is relatively low (2011) comparing to Hungarian rate (12% in 2011) it can be expected that people are satisfied. Although the presupposition that locals global emotional intelligence is above the average is not supported, *Well-being* and *Emotionality* levels fall into the high level category. As women tend to score higher in these facets there may be an implication that the 'Queen's Town' is really a feminine place with optimist, happy, emphatic people with high self-esteem who put emphases on liaising and maintaining long lasting personal relationships. Concerning touristic marketing and possible investor's point of view it is definitely a competitive advantage.

Nonetheless it is important to emphasise that the results are ahead to be further analysed to examine deeper relations between the variables. The present research intention has been to report the first results in English.

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