

Emotional factors that mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological problems in emerging adults (pp. 249-267)

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In the last decades, the rates of depression and anxiety in emerging adults have increased compared to other age groups. The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological problems, considering the mediating role of emotional factors such as empathy, self-esteem, and happiness. The participants were 399 young adults ($M= 20.38$, $SD= 2.46$, 76.9% women) who completed an assessment dossier that included measures of emotional intelligence, empathy, self-esteem, happiness, emotional symptoms, and somatic complaints. A cross-sectional design with self-report data was used and structural equation modeling (SEM) with mediation analysis was performed. Emotional intelligence was positively associated with happiness, empathy, and self-esteem, and negatively with anxiety, depression, stress, and somatic complaints. Happiness was the most relevant mediator in the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional symptoms. These results stress the need to promote the development of emotional abilities in emerging adults, which fosters happiness and good mental health