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Relationship between Emotional Creativity, Emotional Intelligence and the Dark Triad Traits

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Abstract — Emotional regulation (ER) is integral to various aspects of human activity and decision-making. One of the most well-studied constructs in emotional regulation is emotional intelligence (EI). Emotional creativity (EC) may be viewed in conjunction with research in the field of ER. EI is the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions and the emotions of others. EC is understood as the ability to experience and express original, appropriate, and authentic combinations of emotions. The Dark Triad traits (DT), on the contrary, can be seen as a manifestation of the unstable emotional core. This study examined the relationship between these three components of the ER. The study participants were 425 Russian students, aged 17 to 43 ($M=20.3$, $SD=3.2$), 61% women. The following questionnaires were used: (i) Questionnaire on emotional intelligence – EI, measuring interpersonal and intrapersonal emotional intelligence, understanding and managing emotions; (ii) Emotional Creativity Inventory, measuring novelty and preparation – as per the original inventory, effectiveness and authenticity – divided into two separate factors, and emotional complexity – a newly established factor for the Russian sample; (iii) Dirty Dozen Questionnaire measuring the Dark Triad traits – Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy.

Women scored higher in understanding other people's emotions, in EC preparation (readiness to reflect on emotions) and in emotional complexity. Men showed higher levels of intrapersonal EI and psychopathy (all $p<0.05$). Due to these differences, all partial correlations accounted for sex.

EC effectiveness (the potential benefit of an emotional reaction for an individual or society) was positively associated with EI control of one's own ($r=0.25$, $p<0.05$) and other people's ($r=0.27$, $p<0.05$) emotions. EC emotional complexity refers to experiencing and differentiating conflicting emotions occurring simultaneously. Students with high scores on this scale had lower intrapersonal EI ($r=-0.30$, $p<0.05$) and a lower understanding of their emotions ($r=-0.26$, $p<0.05$).

Students with high psychopathy demonstrated higher scores on EI emotional expression ($r=0.28$, $p<0.05$) and on EC novelty ($r=0.29$, $p<0.05$). EC novelty refers to a new result of the creative process. A novelty was negatively associated with authenticity ($r=-0.25$, $p<0.05$), understood as an individual's creative response, reflecting their values and beliefs. The scale of emotional complexity refers to emotional dialecticism (experiencing positive and negative emotions at the same time) and to emotional differentiation (a gradual experience of emotions, with a wide variety of negative and positive emotions). However, a negative relationship between these scales with emotional intelligence may mean that students who register polar emotions may be unable to differentiate their emotional experiences. Students with high psychopathy are characterized by higher expression control, but also by EC novelty. Items in the

novelty scale emphasize unusualness and originality in comparison to others. Perhaps, students with high psychopathy rely on this particular component in EC. There is more to EC than meets the eye: it relates to both successful regulation (through EI) and the unstable emotional core. The study was supported by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research, project 19-29-07069.

Keywords—dark triad traits, emotional creativity, emotional intelligence, emotional regulation.

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