RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND COPING AMONG CHILDREN IN THE U.S.

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BACKGROUND ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- Link between EI & social intelligence (SI) and their ability to influence each other (Schutte et al., 1998; Sharma, 2008)

- **Leading scholars in Emotional Intelligence (EI) literature**
  - Salovey, Mayer, Caruso, Brackett, Bar-On, Wong, Law, Goleman, Schutte

- **Components of EI** (Law et al., 2004; Bar-On, 2006; Schutte et al., 1998)
  - Perceive, Recognize, Identify, Appraise, Understand, Express, Regulate, Use, Manage in order to facilitate thinking and performance

- **Scales / Measures**
  - WLEIS, Bar-On EQI, TEIQue, MEIS, Schutte EIS, SREIS

- Literature reviewed is primarily international (Europe, Asia, Africa, Middle East); lack of studies performed on American subjects
BACKGROUND ON COPING

- **Leading scholars** in coping literature
  - Lazarus, Laborde

- **Strategies** (from the BreifCope in Boyer et al., 2017)
  - Self-distraction, denial, substance use, emotional support, behavioral disengagement, venting, positive reframing, acceptance, religion, self-blame

- **Styles / Types**
  - Problem-focused vs. emotion-focused
  - Active vs. passive coping

- **Scales / Measures**
  - Coping Effectiveness Scale, Children’s Coping Strategies Checklist, Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations, BriefCope
1) **Discuss preliminary findings** and themes from this review of available literature that explores EI and coping in children up to 18 years old.

2) **Raise SW practitioner awareness** about the importance of cultivating the skills associated with EI & coping in children
   - Help SWers understand the role of EI & coping on development, and the long-term impacts these constructs can have on well-being.
METHODOLOGY

• Qualitative content analysis
  • **Databases used:** West Chester University Libraries, Ebscohost, Taylor & Francis Group, Elsevier via ScienceDirect, Open Athens, Sage Journals
  • **Keywords used:** emotional intelligence, coping, children, adolescence, United States, culture
  • Exploratory systematic review on the relationship between emotional intelligence and coping in children in the United States
PRELIMINARY FINDINGS (6 MAJOR THEMES)

❖ **Athletes**
  - EI: positively correlated with more physical sport activity (Amado-Alonso et al., 2019)
    - Better intra- and interpersonal capabilities
  - EI: facilitated more adaptive coping (Cowden, 2016)
  - Relationship between EI & coping mediated by...
    - Mental toughness (Cowden, 2016)
      - Related to increased problem-focused coping

❖ **Mental Health (MH)**
  - EI as protective factor for internet addiction (Sun et al., 2019)
  - EI & MH affect each other (Nogaj, 2020)
  - EI has moderating effect on relationship between MH & stress (Huang et al., 2017)
PRELIMINARY FINDINGS (CONT.)

❖ Gender

• Higher EI in girls (Yang & Wang, 2016; Amado-Alonso et al., 2019)

❖ Risk: Interpersonal Threats

• Cybervictimization (less use of EI skills as this increases) (Rey et al., 2018)
  • Deficits in EI are linked to higher victimization (especially in girls with deficits in emotion regulation)
• Child abuse as risk for maladaptive coping and smart phone addiction (Sun et al., 2019)
Cultural Differences

(Yang & Wang, 2016)

European-American Children
- Larger variety of coping strategies
- Higher knowledge of self-conscious emotions led to less distraction coping strategies (finding not present for Chinese immigrant children)

Chinese Immigrant Children
- More knowledge of self-conscious emotions such as...
  - fear (social-shaming)
  - pride (competence & popularity)

(Mousavi & Juhari, 2019)

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Authoritative Parenting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Cultures</td>
<td>Higher likelihood</td>
<td>Lower likelihood</td>
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<td>(Individualism)</td>
<td>of developing EI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arab &amp; Asian Cultures</td>
<td>Lower likelihood</td>
<td>Higher likelihood</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Collectivism)</td>
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PRELIMINARY FINDINGS (CONT.)

- **Psychological Distress**
  
  *(Chan, 2005)*
  
  - High *self-related EI* made it less likely for students to engage in avoidant coping
  - High *other-related EI* made it more likely for students to use social coping
  
  *(Huang et al., 2017)*
  
  - Developed EI is associated with *less psychological symptoms*
IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

The sooner SWers **understand** how important it is for children to develop EI & coping skills early on, the **better equipped** they will be to **make positive contributions to children’s future successes.** *(Morrison, 2007)*

**BENEFITS & SUCCESSES WHICH CORRELATE WITH EI & COPING**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Emotional Intelligence</th>
<th>Coping</th>
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<td>• Incremental predictive power on <strong>life satisfaction</strong> <em>(Law et. al, 2014)</em></td>
<td>• Style can have short-term effects on how one resolves <strong>stressful events</strong>, and long-term effects on their <strong>mental health</strong> and <strong>adjustment</strong> outcomes <em>(Sun et al., 2019)</em></td>
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<td>• Positive links with <strong>life satisfaction</strong> <em>(Huang et al., 2017)</em></td>
<td>• Problem-focused coping is adaptive, effective for <strong>stress management</strong> &amp; <strong>decreases risk of physical health problems</strong> <em>(Sheffler et al., 2019)</em></td>
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<td>• Capacity to affect <strong>quality of life</strong> in self and others <em>(Boyer, 2017)</em></td>
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<td>• EI &amp; MH affect one another. This suggests EI affects <strong>success in life</strong> <em>(Nogaj, 2020)</em></td>
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SWers who are trained in these skills may be more able to help children with...

- Management of self and emotions
- Handling interpersonal interactions and relationships
- Increasing capacity for emotional awareness, flexibility & tolerance

*(Morrison, 2007)*
RECOMMENDATIONS

• Implement EI training and skill-building in higher education curricula (BSW, MSW, DSW)
  • Build awareness of EI through practice and be required to demonstrate competence

• Initiate more research on this topic and population based within the U.S.

• Consider sociocultural background of children who participate in future studies
  • Race, SES, Geographic Location
NEXT STEPS FOR THIS META-ANALYSIS

• Explore gender differences further
• Examine specialized childhood populations
  • Transgender, homeschooled, Autism spectrum
• Investigate effects of COVID-19 pandemic on children, their EI and coping style(s)
• Assess capacity for parental influence on these constructs
• Consider nonviolent communication and empathy as they relate to cultivating EI


