2007), but researchers might also consider group variances or extreme scores for trait EI. This would allow researchers to ascertain whether groups in which members have similar trait EI scores are more successful (for example) than groups where members have dissimilar trait EI scores, or whether a particular team member (e.g., someone scoring low on trait EI) is having a disruptive influence on the group as a collective (see, e.g., Gevers & Peeters, 2009). In their review, Petrides et al. (2016) note that EI is amenable to change. An interesting question therefore, is whether interventions targeted towards group processes (e.g., norms and communication) can increase the emotional intelligence of group members. For this area to move forward, an important direction for future research is to validate current (and new) measures of trait EI in other-report formats. Observational methods (e.g., discourse analysis) might also be beneficial for the assessment of EI in small groups.

As noted by Petrides et al. (2016), the diversity in trait EI conceptualisations is a problem from a research synthesis perspective, and we agree that it would be useful were the field to arrive at a consensus regarding the most important facets of trait EI. In global personality research, the most accepted conceptualisations of personality emerged from analyses of the natural language (Big Five traits) and biological processes (Big Three traits). We are left wondering, is there an objective (and nonstatistical) way to identify the best conceptualisation of trait EI or will research teams continue to disagree? Cross-cultural observational studies of interpersonal interactions might be a useful step towards greater conceptual clarity and theoretical advancement. In short, important progress has been made in understanding trait EI and its correlates (as evident in Petrides et al.’s [2016] review) but more critical analytical techniques might be required in order to advance theory and guide professional practice.

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Comment on Developments in Trait Emotional Intelligence Research: A Broad Perspective on Trait Emotional Intelligence

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**Abstract**

Petrides et al. (2016) provide a comprehensive overview of research findings relating to trait emotional intelligence. The bulk of findings indicate that trait emotional intelligence is of benefit in a variety of realms, including clinical, health, social, educational, and organizational. Trait emotional intelligence has generally been studied as a quality of individuals. Conceptualizing and studying trait emotional intelligence at a systems level extends the construct and creates a foundation for additional applications and benefits. Systems can include couples, groups, societies, and human–artificial intelligence interaction.

**Keywords**

artificial emotional intelligence, group emotional intelligence, societal intelligence, trait emotional intelligence

**Contributions of the Review Article**

Petrides et al. (2016) provide a comprehensive overview of trait emotional intelligence. The review indicates that the correlates of emotional intelligence include positive emotions, good mental health, relationship satisfaction, high academic performance, good work performance, and effective leadership. Reviewed findings regarding trait emotional intelligence and biological states draw on data from different methods of data collection and are less prone to common method bias than associations based only on self-report. The results of randomized controlled trials indicate that emotional intelligence can be increased (Schutte, Malouff, & Thorsteinsson, 2013).

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Extension of Applications of Trait Emotional Intelligence

Petrides et al. (2016) present information regarding the benefits of trait emotional intelligence assessed as a quality of individuals. Trait emotional intelligence can be applied to systems beyond the level of the individual. Conceptualizing trait emotional intelligence at a systems level extends the construct and creates a foundation for additional applications and benefits. Systems can include couples, groups, societies, and human–artificial intelligence interaction.

Emotional Intelligence of Couples, Groups, and Societies

Couples, groups, and societies establish systems of interaction, including emotional interaction. Some views of human behavior, such as interactional family therapy (Andolfi, 2012), recognize that it is beneficial to consider the system as a whole. As individuals within a system interact, they may learn emotional skills from one another and create norms of emotional interaction and experience. A systems approach to trait emotional intelligence may have useful applications. For example, couples with higher aggregate trait emotional intelligence have significantly greater marital satisfaction (Schutte et al., 2001). Researchers examining emotional intelligence as a quality of work groups or teams have found that high emotional intelligence teams show better performance (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011; Bell, 2007).

There may be norms relating to elements of emotional intelligence within a society or societal subgroups (Mackay, White, McNulty, Lane, & Lewis, 2015). The psychologist Albert Bandura showed that large-scale social change in norms, such as norms regarding use of contraceptives, can be prompted by media such as television programs (Bandura, 2004). Media programs likewise might be a vehicle for increasing a society’s level of emotional intelligence.

Artificial Emotional Intelligence

The philosopher Alain de Botton (2015) suggested that, just as computers now aid humans in calculating, remembering, and making decisions, computers in the future may aid humans in adaptive use of emotions. He termed this assistance artificial emotional intelligence (AEI). Such AEI can represent an extension of individual trait emotional intelligence to a system of computer–individual interaction. First, AEI could provide assistance in identifying, regulating, and expressing emotions. For example, a crisis line counselor might receive computer-generated information regarding a caller’s current emotion. Second, AEI could augment individual emotional intelligence in areas such as choice of a romantic partner, career choices, and spending choices. Additionally, AEI might provide needed social support, psychotherapy, and more pleasing human–computer interactions. At present, AEI is more a hope than a reality. For instance, there is no convincing evidence that computer algorithms aid in the selection of romantic partners (Finkel, Eastwick, Karney, Reis, & Sprecher, 2012). However, the importance of emotional intelligence and the relatively inexpensive nature of computing services suggest a potential for growth of AEI applications.

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