

# Emotional Intelligence: Predictor of Success and Career Advancement - A Survey of Bulgarian Digital Entrepreneurs

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**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Digital Entrepreneurship, Career Advancement, Emotionally Intelligent Management, Gender Equality, Success.

**Abstract:** Emotional intelligence has gone from being a buzzword to a potential prospect for business success. An increasing body of research focuses on emotionally intelligent leadership, which fosters creativity, encourages open communication, and cultivates loyalty among employees and business groups. Discussions about whether emotional intelligence predicts the success and professional realization of the individual are still in the early phase of research in Bulgarian scientific and business circles. The authors of this report allow that emotional intelligence has a significant, positive relationship with career success and advancement. The authors surveyed 1175 Bulgarian digital entrepreneurs to confirm or reject the claim. The results show that women have more developed emotional intelligence competencies – self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy and social skills. However, the analysis demonstrates that emotional intelligence is not a sufficient predictor of career development..

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The common understanding of *intelligence* relates to a set of skills we need to analyze and solve specific problems. It is usually measured through tests of logical reasoning, spatial orientation, analytical or language skills. These skills have long been identified as key to a person's success.


Studies show that compared to pure rational intelligence, emotional intelligence (EI) in leadership plays an increasingly significant role in success at work and personal life. Conventional wisdom posits that a high intelligence quotient (IQ) equals success (InitiativeOne, 2022). Nevertheless, the truth is that in their everyday life, people cannot and should not be divided between the emotional and the rational because emotions drive the individual to become a full-fledged person.


Research suggests that business can go far beyond mediocre or subpar results when the people employed can express themselves and their creativity. This would be feasible if beneficial emotions in business were given the freedom to be expressed, recognized, monitored and managed healthily for the individual

and those around them, i.e. emotionally intelligent way. In this way, business organisations will provide an environment filled with optimism, motivation, and creativity, increase the prerequisites for a career future and create a safe environment of trust and loyalty (Dover & Amichai-Hamburger, 2023).

On the other hand, the global development of information technologies has led to the creation of new digital business models (Kraus et al., 2023). Digitalization is increasingly becoming a critical influencing factor for entrepreneurial action, and a digital strategy is a decisive factor in a company's success (Ilyasp et al., 2023). Digital entrepreneurship in this study refers to a subcategory of entrepreneurship in which some or all business activities are digitized.

The primary motivation for the study to focus on digital entrepreneurs (DE) is the exponential growth of employment in the sector and the turnover generated. We are direct witnesses of how they change entire generations and reform the way of thinking, expressing and communicating, leading and doing business, of setting goals and strategies in entrepreneurship. More and more social spheres are digitized – information and services are becoming more accessible

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on the Internet, and digital literacy is becoming mandatory for participation in the modern economy and society (Move.bg, 2017).

The present study aims to establish if the degree of manifestation of EI and its inherent competencies are a stronger predictor of success and career development or if the stereotypical behaviour that gender is predetermining continues to prevail. The following will be done to achieve the goal: (1) a study of the EI of Bulgarian DE by demographic gender; (2) a comparison of the obtained values with the respondents' success feelings; (3) conclusions formulating.

## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In today's world, digital technologies have become essential to our daily routines. However, thriving and achieving success in the digital era demand investments in technology, knowledge and nurturing particular skills, including EI. As digital integration deepens in our lives, actively cultivating EI will gain even more significance (Bajaj, 2023).

### 2.1 Emotional Intelligence Concept

EI is developing as social and managerial skill more and more actively. Broadly, the concept is defined as the ability to read and understand others in a social context, detect their emotional response, and the ability to regulate one's own emotions (Elayan et al., 2023).

Recent research in the field of emotional and rational intelligence casts some shadow on the latter's advantages. Bradberry and Greaves, co-founders of TalentSmart® - a global think tank and consulting agency serving more than 75% of Fortune 500 companies, based on their long-term observations of top managers and their teams, present in their book *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* summary analysis of their work. The results lead to the conclusion that only 20% of the time, people with a high level of intelligence perform better than those with an average level. At the same time, employees and managers with average IQ demonstrate much better performance in 70% compared to those with high IQ (Bradberry & Greaves, 2019: 20).

Laura Wilcox, director of management programs at Harvard Education School as of 2015, presents an even more severe percentage advantage of EI over cognitive and technical skills (*hard skills*). According to her, 90% of what helps people move up the ladder

of success is their EI, even in cases where rational intelligence and acquired hard skills are relatively similar. She defines EI as the ability to understand others, but also the individual to manage himself appropriately, i.e. there is self-regulation. Wilcox believes that a high EI, often placed in the group of undervalued *soft skills*, supports highly valued hard skills by helping individuals think more creatively about how they might use their technical skills. EI's other characteristics help to acquire a unique advantage in performing standard and common work processes: the ability for motivation and self-motivation, resilience, impulse control, postponement of pleasure, empathy, hope, optimism. (Wilcox, 2015). On the other hand, as Nenov and Yordanova (2013:105) point out, a person with low EI acts without thinking about what makes the other person operate in a certain way and is not moved by his motives. His social integration is significantly tricky due to his disrespect for others and concentration on his own personality.

Daniel Goleman, one of the most profound researchers of EI, compares our emotional life to a subject similar to mathematics or reading, which can be practised with more or less skill and yet requires its own set of abilities. According to the author, the main credit for someone's success and others' failures is how we perceive and deal with challenges. EI determines how an individual uses all his other skills, including pure (rational) intelligence (Goleman, 2011: 59).

Similarly, Bradberry et al. (2019: 29-33) define EI as the ability of personal energy to be concentrated and channelled in the right direction to obtain a desired and maximally satisfying result. They also identify EI as the foundation of many critical and important skills as well as essential to success, claiming that EI is responsible for 58% of performance in some professional fields and should be seen as a driving force without which we cannot talk about personal development and leadership.

Guitouni (2003: 72) also the claim that EI is not limited to reading and managing emotions but also causes a purification of the personality. His observations show that this release is the basis for achieving a balance in the activity of the endocrine glands, resulting in a limited release of adrenaline and cortisol into circulation. That leads to a reduction of the harmful effects of these two hormones on the human body and, as a result, improves the physiological and mental health of the individual with corresponding economic and social consequences (lower costs, fewer family and professional conflicts, etc.). The scientist concludes that the sphere of influence of EI is

not only psychological but much more comprehensive. EI contributes to increasing the quality of life and overall human intelligence.

From the viewpoints and definitions presented above, it is clear that each individual contains rational and EI. But there is an opposition between the authors regarding the definition, the degree of manifestation and the leading function of each of the two types of intelligence. That is the reason different theoretical groups have been formed over time. Nevertheless, they all agree that there are strong enough indicators that EI can be just as crucial, if not more important, than IQ. However, it cannot be stated categorically how much EI influences the individual and his success. The supporters of classical intelligence seriously dispute research in this direction as a factor in achieving goals which means that the EI still needs to be more comprehensive studies and analyses.

## 2.2 Digital Entrepreneurship as Opportunity and Tendencies in Bulgaria

All signs indicate that the business as we know it is changing. As a result, companies must search for prosperity outside their comfort zone (Solis, 2015: 174). The possibilities and connectivity afforded by the Internet and new technologies create a force as fundamental as *the domestication of the horse, the advent of shipping, the railroad, and the automobile* (Barn, 2012: 68).

The widespread use of the Internet and other information and communication technology tools forced traditional entrepreneurship to adapt to new realities and, making the most of these tools, develop in a new, digital direction. Therefore, for the Bulgarian entrepreneur to find a suitable place in the global village and actively participate in the developing digital economy, he must urgently move toward upgrading his digital knowledge and skills (Zagorcheva & Pavlov, 2020). Petkov defines upgrading from conventional to electronic business as inevitable for business development. The active and purposeful presence of companies on the Internet is essential to this transition (Petkov, 2016; Kostadinova, 2019).

The information economy is based on digital technologies. It is also known as the Internet economy, New economy, Digital economy or Web economy. Regardless of what the researchers call it, intertwining with the traditional economy is inevitable, and a clear distinction between them is becoming increasingly more complex (Efinance.bg, 2015). It is only indisputable that the entrepreneurial function is a

significant component of the economy and has an active role in all its aspects.

The terms digital entrepreneurship, digital transformation, digital economy, as well as a home office (also reinforced by the pandemic situation that marked the years 2020 and 2021) have become not only the new normal but also an indicator of a series of transformations in the hitherto imposed beliefs, values, judgments, behaviour and last but not most minor – in existing business models, processes and competencies. The entry into the digital age, also known as the information age or the new media age, brings with it *the shift to the information economy (starting with the rise of the Internet) and destroys industrial value* (InnoWork, 2014). The primary resources that create wealth are information and knowledge. The wealthiest companies, such as Apple, Facebook, Google, etc., increase their productivity by controlling and using these resources to create products and services that satisfy and largely anticipate the needs of consumers.

The data presented by the Bulgarian e-commerce association, referring to the annual report of E-commerce Europe, that in 2020 the volume of online sales (as an area of digital entrepreneurship) of the B2C (business to consumer) services in Bulgaria exceeded *1.9 billion. BGN*, and the growth of electronic purchases and sales reached 8.83% until 2019, with e-commerce: (1) in sales with a growth of about 36%, and (2) in the area of services (including telephones reservations and typical packages, plane tickets, concert tickets, online games, etc.) is a drop of about 30%. Janet Naydenova, BEA president, also points out that the share of electronic B2C traffic in Bulgaria in the gross domestic product (e-GDP) is growing: from 0.48% in 2014 to 1.53% in 2019, and 1.79% for 2020. This positive trend is again much below the average European value of 4-5%, as well as about what is considered the most developed e-GDP for Europe - Britain, where e-GDP is over 8% for the 2020, determined as a consequence of the pandemic and as extremely strong for e-commerce (Simova, 2021).

## 3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology developed for this study is based on Daniel Goleman's model of EI (2011), with five spheres of competence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Then, based on the degree of manifestation of each competence, the EI of each respondent was calculated, and according to a predetermined scale, was classified as *high, average or low*. The survey used questions from

*Professional Emotional Intelligence Tests* by Tolley and Wood (2020). In the study, the Motivation component of Goleman's model is divided into Self-Motivation (Optimism) and Motivation, and the aim is to study the ability of Bulgarian DE to motivate both themselves and others.

The survey aims to answer the following research questions:

**Q1:** *Could it be argued that EI predicts success?*

**Q2:** *Is EI a stronger predictor of career development than gender and rational intelligence?*

**Q3:** *Does women's higher emotional intelligence affect the proportion of women in leadership positions?*

The survey was conducted from *January 25 - March 25, 2021*, and is aimed at DE operating from Bulgaria and developing in different directions. The general population is 42,238<sup>3</sup> enterprises. The minimum sample size is 381 at the 95% confidence level. The survey form for the study was prepared with the toolkit of the Google Forms web application and contained 42 questions relevant to the purpose and tasks of the study, of which 39 were closed-ended. The form is anonymous and includes: (a) two demographic questions; (b) two questions relating to the digital business which the respective entrepreneur is developing; (c) two questions giving a subjective assessment of how successful and motivated the respective DE is defined; (d) 36 questions exploring individual EI competencies.

The survey was carried out by distributing the Google forms link in professional groups of DE, separated in social networks, personal contacts with entrepreneurs developing digital businesses, and professional contacts with various associations and associations that include a link to the survey in their official newsletter, among which Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bulgarian E-Commerce Association and among public opinion leaders (influencers and bloggers).

The obtained results<sup>4</sup> allow analysis and search for correlations in two directions:

(1) by demographic gender, and

(2) depending on whether the respective DE is self-identified as successful.

## 4 RESULTS

The survey included 791 women (67.30% of respondents) and 384 men (32.70%). *Table 1* shows the summary data on the competencies of EI according to the gender of the respondents. The final results of EI by gender are obtained as an average of the sum indicators for the six individual EI competencies. Female DE demonstrate high level self-awareness, self-regulation, optimism, motivation, empathy and social skills, while in men, the manifestation values of the listed components of EI are predominantly average values.

The results show that female DE demonstrate the highest EI (57.59%) compared to men (36.07%), whose result fluctuates between high and average EI - 37.41% of the respondents- men have average developed EI. On the other hand, 26.53% of the man respondents have a low or weakest degree of manifestation of EI competencies. *Figure 1* visually presents the difference in the levels of development and manifestation of EI according to the gender of the respondents. The results are definitive and entirely to the benefit of women DE.

Table 1: Summary data on the EI by gender.

Competencies	Level	Female	Male
Self-awareness	High	58.19%	36.04%
Self-regulation		58.68%	44.00%
Optimism		61.38%	44.83%
Motivation		47.12%	40.76%
Empathy		67.60%	28.31%
Social skills		52.58%	22.46%
<b>EI</b>		<b>57.59%</b>	<b>36.07%</b>
Self-awareness	Average	32.39%	49.24%
Self-regulation		22.16%	22.35%
Optimism		22.02%	33.69%
Motivation		19.67%	39.78%
Empathy		21.71%	38.07%
Social skills		32.26%	41.34%
<b>EI</b>		<b>25.04%</b>	<b>37.41%</b>
Self-awareness	Low	9.42%	14.72%
Self-regulation		19.16%	33.65%
Optimism		16.60%	21.63%
Motivation		33.21%	19.46%
Empathy		10.69%	33.62%
Social skills		15.16%	36.08%
<b>EI</b>		<b>17.37%</b>	<b>26.53%</b>

<sup>3</sup> Formed by 38,238 enterprises, which represent 10.9%, offering goods and services online [https://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/pressreleases/ICT\\_ent2020\\_PSRP7D5.pdf](https://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/pressreleases/ICT_ent2020_PSRP7D5.pdf) (out of a total of 350,804 active enterprises in Bulgaria according to NSI data <https://www.nsi.bg/bg/content/7697/брой-на->

предприятия) and 4,000 freelance developers and engineers in Bulgaria <https://dev.bg/digest/tech-people-working-in-bulgaria/>

<sup>4</sup> Due to the use of average values, where not applicable (n/a), no absolute value is indicated, only a relative share of respondents.

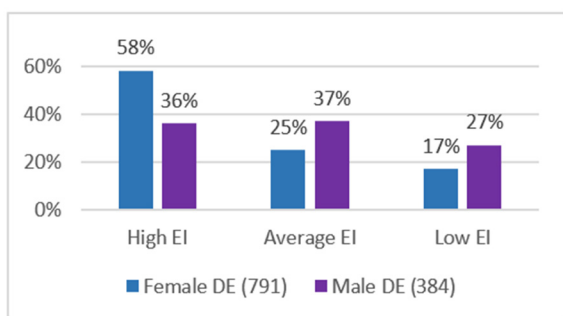


Figure 1: Summary data on EI by gender.

Although they demonstrate a much higher level of *Optimism* - 61.38% compared to 44.83% (Table 1), female DE are to a lesser extent *optimistic* - 30.47% (241) of them are rather enthusiastic and hopeful about their current professional endeavours compared to over 39% (150) of men (Table 2). Definitely, the feeling of *Optimism* also affects entrepreneurial attitudes. Over 16% (131) of women entrepreneurs, compared to just under 6% (23) of men, are starting a business. Therefore, the first group of respondents is more open to new opportunities and optimistic about their business activities' results.

The high levels of *Optimism* explain the difference in why some succeed, and others fail or how the individual perceives and deals with challenges (Goleman, 2022). Undoubtedly optimistic people see problems not as obstacles but as new opportunities, which also explains the low share of women who self-identified as Unsuccessful - 5.56% (44) compared to over 30% (116) of men.

Relatively similar percentage - around 30% of men feel *Exhausted and Discouraged* (115) and *Motivated and Satisfied* (119), while there is a much greater dissonance among women - just under 6% (45) admit to feeling discouraged, and over 63% (505) are satisfied with their current development.

Table 2: Data by gender and whether respondents self-identified as successful, motivated, unsuccessful, exhausted, optimistic (with the possibility of choosing more than one answer).

Indicator	Results	
	Female (791)	Male (384)
Successful	77.62% (614)	63.80% (245)
Unsuccessful	5.56% (44)	30.21% (116)
Starter	16.56% (131)	5.99% (23)
Something else	0.25% (2)	0.00% (0)
Optimistic	30.47% (241)	39.06% (150)
Motivated	63.84% (505)	30.99% (119)
Exhausted	5.69% (45)	29.95% (115)

Tables 3 and 4 visualize the search results, dividing respondents into two groups: successful (859 or 73.1% of the respondents) and unsuccessful (160 or 13.6%) DE. The study strongly confirms the claim that highly emotionally intelligent entrepreneurs are more successful, but correctness requires further refinement of the facts. The data shows that over 70% of successful entrepreneurs demonstrate high EI. For the unsuccessful, the share is under 7%. In summary, the data demonstrate that a much higher proportion of self-identified successful DE demonstrate highly developed EI competencies. For the unsuccessful, the shares range between medium and low.

The distinction between successful and unsuccessful entrepreneurs reinforces the power of one particular EI competency: *Optimism*. For more than 77% of successful entrepreneurs, a positive attitude is a leading skill; for unsuccessful entrepreneurs, this share is less than 5%.

Table 3: Summary data on EI and its competencies in self-identified as successful DE.

Indicator	Successful Business (859)		
	High	Average	Low
<b>EI</b>	<b>70.30%</b>	<b>21.39%</b>	<b>8.30%</b>
Social skills	65.79%	27.36%	6.85%
Empathy	71.73%	16.55%	11.72%
Motivation	71.48%	17.68%	10.85%
Optimism	77.76%	17.68%	4.56%
Self-regulation	66.94%	24.35%	8.71%
Self-awareness	68.10%	27.46%	7.14%

Table 4: Summary data on EI and its competencies in self-identified as unsuccessful DE.

Indicator	Unsuccessful Business (160)		
	High	Average	Low
<b>EI</b>	<b>6.86%</b>	<b>47.01%</b>	<b>46.13%</b>
Social skills	2.92%	31.25%	65.83%
Empathy	10.73%	52.81%	36.46%
Motivation	13.33%	46.88%	39.79%
Optimism	4.79%	55.63%	39.58%
Self-regulation	5.52%	49.48%	45.00%
Self-awareness	3.85%	46.04%	50.10%

## 5 DISCUSSION

It must be admitted that the conducted research cannot provide an absolute answer to the first researcher's question (Q1). In the analysis process, it becomes clear that the lack of results regarding the cognitive intelligence and education of the respondents does not allow us to definitively conclude that EI directly and independently of other factors affects

the individual's success. The data are insufficient to support the assumption that EI alone is sufficient to achieve successes such as high profits, promotion in the hierarchy, number of closed deals, etc. An object of future research would be conducting a similar but more complete study in Bulgaria with a larger volume of data regarding EI, IQ and the education of DE, which would confirm or challenge the conclusions from the data presented in this report.

But the obtained data categorically demonstrate that the *self-perception of achieved success is significantly more pronounced in people with a higher manifestation of EI* and its inherent competencies. From this, one could conclude that EI competencies impact one's sense of success, and *EI can be seen as a success predictor*.

The most striking difference is observed in *Empathy* competence - over 67% of female DE have developed the skill of empathy, i.e. they successfully understand the emotions of others. For men, the percentage is almost twice as low – putting themselves in other people's shoes is possible for less than 30% of them. These data coincide with the results of a 2022 study by the University of Cambridge that, in general, women are better at feeling and showing empathy, regardless of their habitat where they live and their cultural or family influences (Christensen, 2022; Todorova, Ruskova and Kunev, 2018).

A large distinction in the results is also identified in the competence *Social skills*: more than half of the female respondents - 52.58% demonstrate excellent social skills compared to 22.46% of the male respondents. A similar conclusion can also be supported by a study on the topic conducted in 2016 that specifically compared the social skills of men and women. The results show that women have significantly higher overall self-assertion and social confidence scores than men. According to the study's authors, the reasons for the result can be sought in different directions, but mainly because various socio-demographic aspects influence social skills. Among them, gender is emphasized since the acquisition of social skills occurs differently in men and women (Andretta et al., 2016).

The research strongly supports the claim that highly emotionally intelligent entrepreneurs are more successful, but validity requires admitting two significant limitations. First, the claim of *success* or *unsuccess* is highly subjective – entrepreneurs choose for themselves which of the two groups they belong to. We are not talking about a financial or materially supported perception of achieved success but rather the personal feeling of the respondent. At the same time, people do not put the same meaning in the concepts

of success and failure because, for each person, it depends on the specific situation, set personal goals, established value system, etc. What is meant? For example, for a student with predominantly excellent performance (6.00), a grade of 4.00 would be qualified as a failure, while for a student with a tendency to low scores (3.00), the same grade would be an achievement, respectively, a success.

On the other hand, even if the statement of success/failure is accepted precisely as the stereotypical definition of material success, is there any reason to claim that the particular EI is the cause that predetermined the positive results? Is it possible that the result is due to just one of the competencies of the EI person? An object of future research may be the assumption that one or more EI competencies are sufficient for the success of the Bulgarian entrepreneur.

Returning to the results in *Table 3*, *Optimism* stands out as the most developed competence of the successful entrepreneur. This corresponds with the statements of a number of famous leaders and proven entrepreneurs. It is essential to specify that when developing the research methodology, the authors consider the term *Optimism* in the sense of the entrepreneur's internal motivation and the ability to see opportunities where others see problems.

In his book *Screw Business As Usual*, famous entrepreneur Richard Branson quotes Musa Mafonguane, co-founder of Gaming Zone, who says that entrepreneurial people are distinguished from ordinary people by their extraordinary motivation and ambition to develop. And also, because they can see favourable opportunities that not everyone can see, driven by the desire to provide employment and benefit society (Branson, 2017: 61).

Failure should not be a reason for demotivation, but a reason to change direction and revise the plan. A positive attitude is largely seen as an innate characteristic. Goleman argues that optimism and hope can be learned because they are based on a principle called personal efficacy. The principle is associated with the view that one is the master of the events of one's life and can cope with any obstacle, which can also be taken as a definition of *Optimism* (Goleman, 2011: 132).

Regardless of the meaning of success, achievements lie in concrete and practically realized goals. The research shows that this is more relevant for female DE, i.e. it would be rational, based on demonstrated high EI, for women to climb the hierarchical ladder more quickly and to be given more responsibilities with corresponding leadership authority. That would logically answer the second and third research questions (Q2 & Q3).

But what is observed? Bulgaria demonstrates high indicators compared to other member states of the European Union (EU) in terms of equality between men and women. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality the Gender Equality Index of Bulgaria for 2020 is 59.6 (at 67.9 for the entire EU) and 59.9 (at 68 for the whole of the EU). This gives reason to claim that the principle of gender equality in Bulgaria is respected, and the opportunities for hierarchical development do not depend on the gender of the candidate. A careful look at the reports of the Institute does not support this conclusion: (1) Board members of largest companies (% the first semester of 2020) in Bulgaria - 17% women (compared to 29% for the EU) and 83% men (compared to 71% for the EU); (2) Share of members of boards in largest quoted companies, supervisory board or board of directors in Bulgaria for 2021 - 13% women (compared to 30% for the EU) and 87% men (compared to 70% for the EU).

The same indicator observes a negative trend in at least two directions: on the one hand, the percentage of women occupying senior management positions is decreasing by 4%; on the other hand, we are lagging behind the average values of the EU countries by 17% (EIGE, 2020/2021).

Globally, research (Catalyst, 2022; Ariella, 2022) shows that in 2021, 26% of all CEOs are women, and the proportion of women in senior management positions has risen to 31%, which, although the highest percentage registered to date, is still a low share compared to men. Even more striking is a cited Fortune Global 500 report, which reports its all-time high of 23 female CEOs, less than 5% of all included in the list. A year later, this share increasing to just under 9%, which remains a negligible share compared to the 91% male CEOs (Ghazi, 2022). Catalyst also cites an analysis of over 1,100 organisations by Mercer in 2020, which shows that the higher up the corporate ladder one surveys, the fewer women there are: 37% of middle management teams, 29% of senior management and only 23% of CEOs are held by women.

In addition, research on emotional intelligence in Bulgaria is still too few. The article enriches the accepted theoretical basis and allows more correct future comparative analyses. By its nature, the study does not aim to deepen the opposition between genders in career development but to shed light on a real problem in Bulgaria. Recent publications indicate that 81% (44% EU average) of Bulgarians believe that a woman's place is at home to take care of the home, but not at work. Many women are forced to choose part-time employment or compromise their career as-

pirations (Tsvetanova, 2023). The practical application of the findings presented in this report would allow the expansion of business education in the field of EI to achieve gender equality and career development based on competencies, not stereotypes.

## 6 CONCLUSION

This report attempts to measure the EI of Bulgarian DE and to confirm or reject the assumption that EI is a predictor of success and development. The conducted research categorically confirms that EI competencies contribute to the individual's sense of success, and this is particularly strong among female respondents.

It must say that women have much more developed self-awareness, self-control, motivation and optimism, empathy and social skills, they are more communicative and optimistic. However, a number of studies prove that, due to their gender, men remain preferred for leadership positions. Therefore, in Bulgaria a stronger predictor of career development remains an individual's gender rather than his EI.

Female DE demonstrate high EI, while average values prevail among males. All other things being assumed equal, such as IQ, education and social opportunities, ladies have a severe advantage in the form of more developed EI. Theoretically, there is no reason to question their hierarchical growth. However, the statistical data presented at the end of the fifth section on the leadership positions held by women and men do not support the stated statement.

The research draws two main conclusions: (1) EI could be a strong predictor of success but not career development; (2) a stronger predictor of career development remains the gender of the individual. Practice shows that competencies such as motivation, optimism, empathy, and communication skills - i.e. the components of EI, are neglected, probably at the expense of stereotypical perceptions of the *more vigorous sex*. In conclusion, it can be argued that in the 21st century, stereotypes and inculcated cultural beliefs are valued and weigh more heavily in critical decisions like who and how to lead. Emotionally intelligent management is still a mirage.

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