Introduction

We conducted four correlation studies relating personal intelligence to lifespan data. We focus on the first two studies here. In a second set of studies, we included a lifespan scale of counterproductive work behavior—we also report briefly.

Participants

College students in a large New England university completed a lifespan survey and measure of personal intelligence in Studies 1 and 2 (Ns = 384 and 356). Employed organizations recruited through MTurk completed scales of personal intelligence and counterproductive work behavior (and other measures) in Studies 3 and 4 (Ns = 394 and 482; Mayer, Lortie, Panter & Caruso, 2018).

Key Hypotheses

1. People with high personal intelligence, relative to those lower in the ability, will exhibit more positive and fewer negative interactions with other people, as reflected in their lifespan-reported activities.

2. Lifespace reports that covary with personal intelligence may inform us as to styles of reasoning related to different levels of personal intelligence (e.g., overconfidence with low ability level).

Methods

The Tests of Personal Intelligence

The TOPI-4. The Test of Thematic Intelligence is an ability-based measure of reasoning about personal intelligence including inner experiences, traits, goals, and other qualities (Mayer, Panter, & Caruso, 2014).

Personal Intelligence Lifespace Inventory (PILSI) in Studies 1 and 2

To create the Personal Intelligence Lifespace Scale (PILSI), we copied the main areas of the lifespan into a table using the process depicted in Figure 2. We then wrote test items for each area of the lifespan potentially relevant to personal intelligence.

Results

We conducted a very exploratory factor analysis of the lifespan data and obtained four factors (see Table 1): (1) a first factor reflecting an interest in feedback, but not self-knowledge; (2) self-monitoring, setting goals; (3) confident, insensitive judgment; and (4) an “amount of reading” factor. Of those, the External Feedback and Confident Insensitivity correlated r = .19 and -.43 with personal intelligence.

Measures

Test of Personal Intelligence. Measures of the Test of Personal Intelligence (TOPI-4) for Study 1 are available upon request; Study 3 with the TOPI-MINI, and Study 4 with a full-length version (the TOPI 4R). Lifespace Measures. Rather than use our own lifespan scale, we used other ones that benefit coworkers and organizations (e.g., finishing work for a coworker). Counterproductive acts involve aggression and social withdrawal, and counterproductive habits are non-adherence to rules, sabotage, and theft.

Discussion and Conclusions

These studies provide a first examination of personal intelligence in relation to measures of the lifespan. We had mixed success: We found a number of relations in which, as personal intelligence decreased, negative behaviors increased, but very few instances of behaviors that rise with higher personal intelligence. In Studies 1 and 2, lower personal intelligence covaried with more negative interactions with others (and other measures) in Studies 1 and 2, and with asking for more feedback from others (rather than charting one’s own path, perhaps). In Studies 3 and 4, lower personal intelligence was related to higher counterproductive workplace behavior.

The present findings raise the question of other relations with the lifespan might exist, and whether we can find positive, perhaps direct relationships, as opposed to inversions. We have additional studies underway at present that expand our lifespan measures and search for more relationships.

Key Sources


