

Emotionally intelligent people may influence the emotions of others based on their own goals

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Emotionally intelligent people have the ability to manipulate others to satisfy their own interest, according to new research published October 23 in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE*, by Yuki Nozaki and colleagues at Kyoto University.

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability of a person to appropriately regulate self-related and other-related emotions, and is generally associated with [prosocial behavior](#) and better [interpersonal relationships](#). However, the exact social functions of emotional intelligence remain unclear. It is possible that emotionally intelligent people may manipulate others' behaviors to suit their own interest, rather than achieving general prosocial outcomes by managing the emotions of others.

To test these possibilities, the authors experimentally manipulated whether someone was ostracized, i.e., ignored or excluded, in a laboratory game. This "ostracized other" could then attempt retaliation against the other two players that ostracized him/her. The ostracized other could either act rationally and accept fair offers in the monetary game, or act irrationally and reject fair offers, which would reduce rewards for both him/her and their ostracizers.

They found that people with high emotional intelligence were more likely to recommend that the ostracized other inhibit retaliation and accept fair offers when they have a weaker intention to retaliate.

However, they were more likely to recommend that the ostracized other reject fair offers when they had a strong intention to retaliate, in an attempt to manipulate their decision. This study helps refine our understanding of [emotional intelligence](#), and clarifies its social function. Nozaki elaborates, "Emotional intelligence itself is neither positive nor negative, but it can facilitate interpersonal behaviors for achieving goals."

More information: Nozaki Y, Koyasu M (2013) The Relationship between Trait Emotional Intelligence and Interaction with Ostracized Others' Retaliation. PLoS ONE 8(10): e77579. [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0077579](#)

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