

Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Gender Difference : An Empirical Study

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Abstract

Emotions differentiate human beings from animals. It is a subjective conscious experience characterized by psycho-physiological expressions, biological reactions, and mental status. The objective of the current study was to assess whether there existed any differences in emotional intelligence among post graduate students with respect to their gender. A standardized questionnaire was used to conduct the study and data was collected from 100 post graduate students using random sampling method. Emotional intelligence of the sample respondents was measured with the help of a scale developed by Hyde, Pethe, and Dhar (2002) consisting of 34 items. Data was analyzed using SPSS and the results indicated that the level of emotional intelligence among female students was higher than it was in male students.

Keywords : emotional intelligence, gender difference, emotions

JEL Classification : M00, M1, M5

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The psychology of gender has shifted from descriptive classification of “sex differences” to an exciting area of research. For a long time in literature, gender was considered as a simple, stable, and trait like variable, but recent research findings consider it as an ongoing enactment. The new pace of research on gender goes beyond the descriptive by shifting the focus to variables that mediate when and how gender effects occur. Similarly, research studies on emotional intelligence are growing at a faster pace and have emerged as an interesting topic of research. It is believed that gender differences influence the emotional functioning of human beings. Individuals react emotionally in different ways for the same cause because of the gender difference. It may be because men and women are often socialized to have different motives and goals depending on their age, cultural background, and socialization histories. Though the concept is widely documented, but is inconsistent to provide a concrete view on the relationship between gender difference and emotional functioning of individuals.

According to Goleman (1995), there existed an ambiguous view on emotional intelligence and gender difference, and it is argued that males who are high on emotional intelligence are socially balanced, friendly, and happy. He pointed out that men with high emotional intelligence are not prone to unnecessary fear and worry ; they have an ability to take commitment and responsibility towards work and people ; they have an ethical outlook in addition to being sympathetic and caring in their relationships ; their emotional life is rich ; they are relaxed with themselves, others, and the social universe they live in. On the other hand, women are

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more attentive of their feelings and those of others, relate better interpersonally and are considerably more socially responsible than men. Later, Goleman (1998) affirmed that no gender differences existed in emotional intelligence scores and added that men and women may have different profiles of strengths and weaknesses in different dimensions of emotional intelligence, and their overall levels of EI are equivalent. According to Goleman (1995), the particular sub-components in which women scored more than men consisted of interpersonal skills, empathy, and social responsibility; and men scored higher than women in stress tolerance and self-regard.

In professional and personal settings, studies by Mayer and Geher (1996) and Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (2000) found that women were more likely to score higher on measures of emotional intelligence than men. Many a time, differences in the workplace stem from differences in the experiences, responsibilities, and types of stressors that pose as different challenges to the two genders. Women, more often than their male peers, are simultaneously exposed to family and job related stressors as a result of their dual roles as mothers and professionals (Roxburgh, 1996). They also tend to face gender-specific resistance in their efforts to reach the highest positions in organizational hierarchies (Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, and Vanneman, 2001). The interesting point is that family responsibilities and gender specific resistance do not emerge in the beginning of one's career, but towards the middle. Consequently, middle-aged women are more likely to face such challenges than their younger counterparts, which negatively affects their perceived job control and their attitudes towards the organization as a whole.

Katyal and Awasthi (2005) assessed the gender differences in emotional intelligence among 150 adolescents and concluded that girls were found to have higher emotional intelligence than boys. Naghavi and Redzuan (2012) studied the relationship between gender and early adolescents' emotional intelligence among 234 Iranian students, and indicated that the emotional intelligence of girls was higher than that of the boys. They theorized that individual differences of men and women, the expectations of the society, and also of the people around, especially the parents, were different in terms of children's sexuality. Ahmad, Bangash, and Khan (2009) investigated emotional intelligence and gender differences among men and women with the hypothesis that men will score higher on emotional intelligence than women. The results indicated that men scored higher than women on the Emotional Quotient Inventory.

Khalili (2011) assessed gender differences in emotional intelligence among 112 employees of small and medium enterprises (SME) to examine gender differences in four competencies of emotional intelligence (EI). The findings indicated that men had higher level of emotional intelligence than women. Men participants demonstrated higher levels of self awareness, self management, social awareness, and relationship management in comparison with women. Shin (2011) observed that emotional intelligence (EQ) had a link with positive aspects (e.g., self esteem, achievement, and psychological well-being) of an individual. Importance of gender differences in actual and self-perceived EQ levels help to understand these aspects. The findings of the study indicated that there was no significant gender difference in actual and self-estimated EQ levels. However, both genders perceived that men had higher EQ levels as compared to women.

Venkatappa, Shetty, Sparshadeep, Parakandy, and Das (2012) examined the stereotype of women being the more "emotional" sex and women tending to have an edge over men when it came to basic skills for a happy and successful life. The researchers studied the gender differences in emotional intelligence among first year medical students. They observed that majority of the men, women, and the total sample (men and women) had good EI, but it was high in case of women as compared to men. Culturally, women are mostly expected to be more expressive of feelings as girls develop verbal skills earlier than boys, which means that they are more skilled at articulating their feelings and have greater expertise in the use of words. Hence, girls have more information about the emotional world, and they, therefore, speak more about their emotional aspects and use emotional terms more often than boys (Brody & Hall, 2000 ; Fivush, 1991).

With the present backdrop, the present study is a modest attempt to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and gender differences among post graduate students.

Objectives of the Study

Post graduate students from the largest university in Chhattisgarh acted as the participants of the study. The study was conducted with the following objectives :

- (1) To assess whether there exists a relationship between gender and emotional intelligence among the selected post graduate students ; and
- (2) To assess the differences in the level of emotional intelligence competencies among the selected male and female post graduate students.

Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the above objectives, the following research hypotheses were formulated :

- **H1:** There exist significant differences in the level of self awareness across genders among the selected post graduate students who participated in the study.
- **H2 :** There exist significant differences in the level of empathy across genders among the selected post graduate students who participated in the study.
- **H3 :** There exist significant differences in the level of self motivation across genders among the selected post graduate students who participated in the study.
- **H4 :** There exist significant differences in the level of emotional stability across genders among the selected post graduate students who participated in the study.
- **H5 :** There exist significant differences in the level of managing relations across genders among the selected post graduate students who participated in the study.
- **H6 :** There exist significant differences in the level of integrity across genders among the selected post graduate students who participated in the study.
- **H7 :** There exist significant differences in the level of self-development across genders among the selected post graduate students who participated in the study.
- **H8 :** There exist significant differences in the level of value orientation across genders among the selected post graduate students who participated in the study.
- **H9 :** There exist significant differences in the level of commitment across genders among the selected post graduate students who participated in the study.
- **H10 :** There exist significant differences in the level of altruistic behaviour across genders among the selected post graduate students who participated in the study.
- **H11 :** There exist significant differences in the level of emotional intelligence across genders among the selected post graduate students who participated in the study.

Methodology

✦ **Sample :** For the purpose of the study, a total 100 respondents (post graduation students) were randomly selected from the university teaching department of the said university, out of which 50 were men and the remaining 50 were women.

✦ **Data Collection :** Primary data for the purpose of the study was collected with the help of the Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Hyde, Pethe, and Dhar (2002). It consists of 34 items to measure emotional intelligence. The scale measures emotional intelligence based on 10 dimensions: These are self-awareness, empathy, self motivation, emotional stability, managing relations, integrity, self-development, value orientation, commitment, and altruistic behaviour. The responses were measured by using a 5 - point likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The scale values range from 34-170 score. The reliability of the scale was found to be 0.824 (Cronbach's alpha). We collected the primary data from the selected respondents during November to December 2014.

Data Analysis and Results

Data was analyzed using SPSS. The independent samples *t* - test was conducted to compare means for the two groups of students (men = 50, women = 50). Mean and Std. deviation of each emotional intelligence (EI) competencies as well as emotional intelligence as a whole construct was measured to identify whether there is a gender difference between EI abilities or not. Then test for equality variance (Levene's test) and test for equality of means were conducted to find out which components of EI were significantly different between male and female students.

The Table 1 shows the differences between the mean scores of male and female respondents with respect to their emotional intelligence competencies. In terms of self awareness, results indicate that women ($M = 4.1824$; $SD = .39374$) students had greater self-awareness as compared to men ($M = 3.95$; $SD = 0.65352$). Likewise, with respect to empathy, the results show that women ($M = 3.7243$; $SD = 0.5484$) had more empathy as compared to men ($M = 3.6720$; $SD = 0.69971$). Similarly, in case of self motivation, it can be seen from the Table 1 that women ($M = 3.774$; $SD = 0.42892$) had a higher tendency of being self motivated as compared to men ($M = 3.6333$; $SD = 0.60477$). Interestingly, with respect to emotional stability, men ($M = 3.72$; $SD = 0.49072$) had a higher tendency of displaying emotional stability as compared to women ($M = 3.6554$; $SD = 0.49072$). In terms of managing relationships, women ($M = 3.9459$; $SD = 0.48281$) showed a higher tendency of managing relationships well as compared to their male counterparts ($M = 3.8200$; $SD = 0.58861$); whereas, in terms of integrity, men ($M = 3.8267$; $SD = 0.73987$) had greater integrity as compared to women ($M = 3.8198$; $SD = 0.51277$). Similarly, for self development, men ($M = 3.84$; $SD = 0.55377$) showed a higher tendency for self- development as compared to women ($M = 3.7973$; $SD = 0.68170$), and for value orientation, women ($M = 3.8649$; $SD = 0.5968$) showed a higher tendency for the same in comparison to their male counterparts ($M = 3.78$; $SD = 0.52202$).

It can be seen from the Table 1 that men ($M = 4.0800$; $SD = 0.64031$) showed a slightly higher level tendency of commitment as compared to women ($M = 4.0541$; $SD = 0.62120$). Similarly, with respect to altruistic behavior, men ($M = 4.0000$; $SD = 0.62915$) showed a higher tendency to display altruistic behaviour as compared to women ($M = 3.7703$; $SD = 0.52168$).

The Table 2 depicts the group statistics (emotional intelligence) and it can be seen that overall, women ($M = 3.8577$; $SD = .26827$) were little more emotionally intelligent as compared to men ($M = 3.7986$; $SD = .45693$).

Table 1. Group Statistics (Emotional Intelligence Competencies)

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Self Awareness	Female	50	4.1824	.39374	.06473
	Male	50	3.9500	.65352	.13070
Empathy	Female	50	3.7243	.54843	.09016
	Male	50	3.6720	.69971	.13994
Self Motivation	Female	50	3.7748	.42892	.07051
	Male	50	3.6333	.60477	.12095
Emotional Stability	Female	50	3.6554	.49072	.08067
	Male	50	3.7200	.49072	.11930
Managing Relationships	Female	50	3.9459	.48281	.07937
	Male	50	3.8200	.58861	.11772
Integrity	Female	50	3.8198	.51277	.08430
	Male	50	3.8267	.73987	.14797
Self Development	Female	50	3.7973	.68170	.11207
	Male	50	3.8400	.55377	.11075
Value Orientation	Female	50	3.8649	.59685	.09812
	Male	50	3.7800	.52202	.10440
Commitment	Female	50	4.0541	.62120	.10212
	Male	50	4.0800	.64031	.12806
Altruistic Behavior	Female	50	3.7703	.52168	.08576
	Male	50	4.0000	.62915	.12583

Table 2. Group Statistics (Emotional Intelligence)

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
EI	Female	50	3.8577	.26827	.04410
	Male	50	3.7986	.45693	.09139

The Table 3 shows Levene's test for equality of variance. It can be seen from the Table 3 that empathy (p - value = .337 > 0.05), self motivation (p - value = .284 > 0.05), emotional stability (p - value = .176 > 0.05), managing relationships (p - value = .264 > 0.05), self-development (p - value = .307 > 0.05), value orientation (p - value = .704 > 0.05), commitment (p - value = .982 > 0.05), altruistic behaviour (p - value = .960 > 0.05) are all beyond > or = 0.05, which means that there are no significant differences between the sample respondents (men and women) in these competencies of emotional intelligence. However, on the other hand, self-awareness (p - value = 0.014 < 0.05), integrity (p - value = .010 < 0.05), and emotional intelligence (p - value = .011 < 0.05) together as a whole construct between men and women show significant differences.

The Table 4 shows a summary of the findings of the study. Based on the findings, empathy (H2), self motivation (H3), emotional stability (H4), managing relationships (H5), self-development (H7), value orientation (H8), commitment (H9), and altruistic behaviour (H10) were not significantly different between the genders as their p -value > 0.05. In contrast, self-awareness (H1), integrity (H6), and overall emotional intelligence were significantly different among the men and women as the p - value is < 0.05.

Table 3. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t - test for equality of Means					
							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
		<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Self Awareness	Equal variances assumed	6.367	.014	1.748	.086	.23243	.13299	-.03358	.49844
	Equal variances not assumed			1.594	.120	.23243	.14585	-.06344	.52830
Empathy	Equal variances assumed	.938	.337	.329	.743	.05232	.15882	-.26536	.37001
	Equal variances not assumed			.314	.755	.05232	.16647	-.28338	.38802
Self Motivation	Equal variances assumed	1.169	.284	1.078	.285	.14144	.13117	-.12093	.40381
	Equal variances not assumed			1.010	.318	.14144	.14001	-.14152	.42440
Emotional Stability	Equal variances assumed	1.874	.176	-.466	.643	-.06459	.13865	-.34194	.21275
	Equal variances not assumed			-.449	.656	-.06459	.14402	-.35471	.22552
Managing Relationships	Equal variances assumed	1.274	.264	.922	.360	.12595	.13661	-.14732	.39922
	Equal variances not assumed			.887	.380	.12595	.14198	-.16008	.41198
Integrity	Equal variances assumed	7.064	.010	-.043	.966	-.00685	.15890	-.32470	.31101
	Equal variances not assumed			-.040	.968	-.00685	.17030	-.35122	.33752
Self Development	Equal variances assumed	1.061	.307	-.260	.796	-.04270	.16405	-.37084	.28544
	Equal variances not assumed			-.271	.787	-.04270	.15756	-.35812	.27271
Value Orientation	Equal variances assumed	.146	.704	.577	.566	.08486	.14708	-.20934	.37907
	Equal variances not assumed			.592	.556	.08486	.14328	-.20215	.37188
Commitment	Equal variances assumed	.001	.982	-.159	.874	-.02595	.16282	-.35164	.29975
	Equal variances not assumed			-.158	.875	-.02595	.16380	-.35485	.30295
Altruistic Behavior	Equal variances assumed	.003	.960	-1.565	.123	-.22973	.14682	-.52342	.06396
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.509	.138	-.22973	.15228	-.53643	.07697
Emotional Intelligence	Equal variances assumed	6.958	.011	.642	.523	.05915	.09215	-.12518	.24348
	Equal variances not assumed			.583	.564	.05915	.10147	-.14680	.26510

Table 4. Summary of Findings

H1	Accepted
H2	Rejected
H3	Rejected
H4	Rejected
H5	Rejected
H6	Accepted
H7	Rejected
H8	Rejected
H9	Rejected
H10	Rejected
H11	Accepted

Discussion

The basic purpose of the current study was to examine whether gender differences existed in 10 competencies of emotional intelligence (EI) as well as EI as a whole construct. The study revealed that women participants had higher levels of self awareness, empathy, self management, relationship management, and value orientation ; the men participants scored higher on emotional stability, integrity, self development, commitment, and altruistic behavior. More interestingly, the overall results indicate that women are relatively more emotionally intelligent as compared to men, which is in line with the commonly believed social perception in the society and supports what Brody and Hall (2000) said about the emotions of women. The results of emotional intelligence as a whole construct are also similar to the findings of King (1999), Sutarso (1999), Wing and Love (2001), and Singh (2002), which revealed that women have a higher level of emotional intelligence than men. Similarly, Kaur (2013) examined the gender differences on different components of emotional intelligence, that is, emotional competency, emotional maturity, and emotional sensitivity. Women scored significantly higher on emotional sensitivity and emotional maturity, and men scored higher than women in case of emotional competency. On the contrary, Petrides and Furnham (2000) and Shahzad and Bagum (2012) demonstrated that boys self believed that they had higher emotional intelligence than girls.

The findings of the study reveal that significant differences do not exist in eight competencies of emotional intelligence (empathy, self motivation, emotional stability, managing relations, self-development, value orientation, commitment, and altruistic behaviour) which could be due to socioeconomic and cultural changes in society and family size, growth, and exposure of females with the changing environment. However, there exist significant difference in self awareness, integrity, and overall emotional intelligence across genders. The findings of the current study are similar to the results obtained by Kaur (2013). Kaur also observed in her study that there were no significant differences in three competencies of emotional intelligence (self awareness, self management, and social awareness). However, there was a significant difference in the relationship management ability between different types of genders. Likewise, Al Noor, Uddin, and Shamaly (2011) revealed no significant differences in emotional intelligence competencies like self-awareness, managing emotions, self-motivation, relating well, and emotional mentoring. On contrary, Dunaway (2013) suggested that there was a significant gender difference in the relationship between a team member's awareness of his or her own emotions, management of others' emotions, and team effectiveness.

Managerial Implications

Emotional intelligence is important for fostering relationships with others through formal and informal teamwork and collaboration. The level of emotional competence of women as compared to men is a good indicator for the society in general and employers in particular to give more and more employment opportunities to women, which were earlier being given to men only. A prospective employee's socio - cultural background and emotional intelligence competency can be examined at the time of selection so that managers can put the right person at the right place to avoid absenteeism, grievance, and turnover of employees from the organization.

Conclusion

Research regarding emotional intelligence has gained increased attention. Individuals equipped with these emotional competencies are better at dealing with uncertain situations. Emotional skills in students - as a core skill - if properly nurtured, can lead to personal development. Individuals should hone their untapped skills of emotional intelligence to gain a competitive edge. Academic institutions should work towards developing and

channelizing these soft competencies through which students can better identify and understand their hidden potential and capacities.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

The present study was limited to only one university. The sample size of the study is too small to generalize the results. Since the study is based on primary data, the results are as good as the accuracy of the responses given by the participants. The instrument used in data collection is a self-reporting instrument, which could potentially lead to inflation as the respondents rated themselves highly. A cross-sectional study was conducted due to time constraints, and the conclusions drawn are typically based on observations made at only one time. The sampling method used in the study is non-probability sampling, which may lead to low generalization potential of the results, and hence, low validity, and can also introduce serious biases as certain groups may be under-represented.

Further research must be conducted to find out those factors which are the causes for differences in understanding and behavior of male and female students based on emotional intelligence. The differences in understanding due to gender among students needs to be taken into account, and efforts should be made by the academic institutions so that emotional intelligence can be formalized and developed as a core skill in this competitive environment. Further research is required to determine the impact of gender on emotional intelligence in terms of academic and job performance.

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