

Emotional Intelligence of University Students: Gender Based Comparison

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Abstract

Study on emotional intelligence is developing as an important construct in the education field. This construct influences the performance of students. It is a matter of common observation that some persons are less intelligent and they succeed in life better than those who are highly intelligent. Here the construct of emotional intelligence arises. This research study aimed to explore the difference in emotional intelligence on gender basis. A survey research design was used. The population of research consisted of all the students of University of Malakand studying in BS (Hons.) classes. 180 university students BS (Hons.) were selected out of whom 67 were female and 113 were male. Six departments were selected randomly from all departments in university. Thirty subjects were selected from every department randomly from BS classes hence it was a multi stage random sampling. The questionnaire, Self-Report Measure of Emotional Intelligence (SRMEI) was used as data collection tool. Data were analyzed through SPSS. The test applied for data analysis was independent samples t-test. The result of the study showed that male students were highly emotionally intelligent than female studies. Male students were also more intelligent on factors emotional self-regulation and emotional self-awareness than female while there was no significant difference on the subscale of interpersonal skills.

Keywords: Gender, emotional intelligence, university students, self-regulation, self awareness

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Introduction

Adjusting oneself to the environment is called intelligence. This change depends on the society and culture. Everyday experiences create this ability by using reflective thinking for improving learning (Sternberg, 2003). Banks (2012) determined that intelligence is a psychobiological ability to process data that can be used in a social background so that problems may be resolved. Emotional intelligence means being intelligent about feelings and sentiments. Emotions play an important role in our everyday life. It plays part in the interactions and success in day to day life. Drigas, and Papoutsis (2018) assert that an individual control his/her own feelings and emotions, to differentiate between their emotions, and apply the data in her/his thoughts and taking actions. Goleman (1998) has introduced the term emotional intelligence. He asserts that the understanding of one's own emotional state and of others for controlling and understanding several relationships and activities with others is emotional intelligence.

Fernandez, Berrocal, Cabello, Castillo and Extremera (2012) assert that the effects of emotional intelligence on day to day life are significant. Similarly, Mohzan, Hassan and Hall (2013) assert the effect of emotional intelligence on professional development is also important. It is worth mentioning that emotional intelligence improves to a great extent the learning of individuals in terms of individual career, growth and development. Fida, Ghaffar, Zaman and Satti (2018) are of the view that emotional intelligence helps emotional firmness and learners at the university level or higher degree institutions are expected to be more firm and enthusiastically gifted. University education provides a platform to the young students to enter successfully into the job market. Predictably, a few emotional states are considered to be involved with gender i.e. females are considered to be emotionally more communicative whereas males to be emotionally calm and firm (Shehzad & Mahmood, 2013). Moreover girl's reach adolescent age prior to male. Therefore this study was intended to be carried out on (EI) on gender basis.

Literature Review

The skill, extents, aptitude, or self-perceived ability to measure and point out, understand the emotions of others and his/her own as well as of others are called emotional intelligence. Emotionally smart people can evaluate their own feelings and those of others (Serrat, 2017). Bratianu (2015) asserts such intelligence to understand a person's own emotions, for assisting cognition, producing emotions, to comprehend emotions and knowledge about emotions, and to have metacognition about emotions so as to enhance intellectual growth. Emotional intelligence has four dimensions: the capability to precisely understand and direct emotion, control emotion in thoughts, recognize emotion, and control emotions in others and him/herself.

Brackett, Rivers, and Salovey (2011) assert emotional intelligence as the capability to relate with people in a better way and consider their desires, wishes, thoughts, aims, moods, drive, and needs thoroughly. Emotional intelligence creates the capability of motivating and interacting with other people. Sternberg (2003) asserts that emotionally intelligent people monitor other people thoughts and emotional intelligence plays its role when other people motivation, thoughts, attitudes and behavior are tried to be understood.

Johnson and White (2002) claim that professions associated through interpersonal intelligence are administrators, statesmen, managers, saints, nurses, psychologists, public relation officers, counselor and social director. It is noteworthy that self-awareness (interpersonal intelligence), understanding other people feelings, and managing relationships are compulsory sub constructs of social intelligence, while handling emotions and inspiring oneself are from psychomotor domain. Thus, emotional intelligence shows alternatives tasks for socially intelligent people. Emotional intelligence is broader in nature than social intelligence on the aspects of understanding one's own and those of others feelings. Emotional intelligence is more concerned than social intelligence in that it relates mainly to the emotional (but not essentially vocal) difficulties rooted in personal and social difficulties.

The five societal and emotional capabilities which mark emotional intelligence are: self-motivation, self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills and empathy. The notion of emotional intelligence contains four units: regulating and managing emotions, comprehending, rational thinking about emotion, integrating basic emotional experiences, and perceiving and appraising emotions (Goleman, 1998). Crowne (2009) concluded about several concepts of emotional thinking and stated that the recognition and achievement of one's own and others emotions with the ability to engage this emotional data in the cognitive process and in taking suitable steps is emotional intelligence. Goleman's book in 1995 permitted the lay man to understand and read about the idea of emotional intelligence and apply Goleman's model on their children and workstations as a new and exhilarating idea, but some people were not reasonably as persuaded and projected that it was a new term for a collection of already well-known abilities (Woodruffe, 2001). Sparrow and Knight (2006) assert about the opinion that emotional intelligence includes emotions, ideas and functions. It is only an inclination rather than a practice.

Emotional intelligence contains Ability Model, presented by Mayer and Salovey (1997) which is one of the well-known model. Pérez, Petrides and Furnham (2005) assert the second model that is about cognition oriented (Prentice, 2008) and assert that this model has an element of pure intelligence as well as social. Bar On (1997) asserts that emotional intelligence contains not only emotional, social as well as cognitive oriented

faculties. Trait models assume that emotional intelligence is a summation of behavioral and social attributes to understand and work on emotions (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). Goleman (1998) measure about EI is composed of three sub constructs: emotional self-awareness, emotional self-regulation, and interpersonal skills. He termed these sub constructs as emotional competencies.

Emotional self-regulations

Khan (2008) asserted the capability of a person to say no to thoughtless desires and self-control is interwoven in the lack of anxious and disrupting feelings is emotional self-regulation. Such an individual has positive flexibility and believes that all people face ups and downs in their life span but it is imperative to balance the ratio of negative and positive emotions that controls the sense of happiness. Such a person is responsible and disciplined, has reliability and his/her conduct is consistent with these actions. Accepts new information and can let go of old expectations and standards. He/she struggles to improve themselves and their surroundings self-reliantly. A self-reactive person is highly self-regulated, and be able to express his feelings in a stable and consistent way.

Emotional Self-awareness (ESA). ESA deals with a person's capability to identify and distinguish his/her feelings as these occur and to recognize how these feelings put effect on their own social life. Self-assessment that is perceived shows an individual assessment of one's own limits and powers from others and self-point of view. It also shows ones empathies of the areas for development the confidence to progress and advance their flaws (Khan, 2008).

Interpersonal Skills. Such individual who is good in social skills would be able to handle and manage emotions in other people influentially, is intelligent to join with new ones without indecision in a frank way on both pleasing and hostile events. He can identify upsetting situations and try to tranquil those individuals who are involved. It mainly measures interpersonal effectiveness and adjustment (Khan, 2008).

Rationale of the study

Emotional intelligence impacts not only the performance but also health of individuals. We watch individuals who are not too much intelligent but they live a satisfactory and better life than highly intelligent individuals. Here emotional intelligence arises. Farooq (2003) asserts that greater emotional intelligence leaded to high performance than less emotional intelligent students. Zizzi, Deaner and Hirschhorn (2003) assert that emotional intelligence even improves athletes' performance too by controlling imagery, easing training, and self-regulation, and vigor control, alertness, self-monitoring, and setting of goals. These are all characteristics that have relationship with athletes' performance. It also puts effect positively on academic and professional development (Mohzan, Hassan &

Hall, 2013). Some studies have shown that the emotional intelligence of girls are stronger than male (Patel, 2017). Moreover, some characteristic about emotional situations are attached with gender, females are conceived to be emotionally more sensitive and males to be expressively calm and steady (Shehzad & Mahmood, 2013). Rao and Komala (2017) assert that in their study on youth the (EI) of men was higher than women but the result was statistically non-significant. Ahmad, Bangash, and Khan (2009) assert that men have higher emotional intelligence than women. The conclusion by Naghaviand Redzuan (2011) is that although female have shown greater emotional intelligence yet other studies have shown contradictory results, therefore more research is needed in this area. Moreover, female reach adolescence age prior to male. Therefore this study was intended to be carried on about (EI) on gender basis.

Statement of the problem

Looking to the importance of emotional intelligence in daily life, its study becomes essential. The girls mature earlier than male so the problem under study is to find out the difference between emotional intelligence of male and female students at BS level.

Objectives of study

This study aimed to explore the following objective:

Explore the emotional intelligence differences of university students based on gender.

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between emotional intelligence of university students on gender basis.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between emotional self-regulation *of university students* on gender basis.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between emotional self-awareness *of university students* on the basis of gender.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference between inter personal skills *of university students* on gender basis.

Research methodology

Research Design

Survey research design was adapted to compare the emotional intelligence of male and female BS (Hons.) students.

Sample and Sampling

The research design was survey for comparison of (EI) on gender basis. The population was all students of Malakand University studying in BS (Hons.). Out of above mentioned population, 180 male and female BS students were randomly selected.

Research instrument

The Self-Report Measure of Emotional Intelligence (SRMEI) scale was used for data collection as a research tool. SRMEI is indigenous scale developed for measuring emotional intelligence of individuals. Cronbach alpha found in sample of 400 individuals was .91(Khan, 2008).

SRMEI is a 60 item emotional intelligence scale consisting of three subscales. It is a five-point Likert scale with five response categories of 'Always', 'Often', 'Moderate', 'Rarely', and 'Never' (5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively). The range of score is from 60 to 300. Positively worded statements are 23 while 37 are negatively worded statements which are reversely scored. The measure is composed of three subscales based on the emotional competencies as termed by Goleman (1998). It is developed on population taken from Pakistan in Pakistani specific culture. While developing SRMEI Goleman's (1998) model was used but the difference lies there that ECI is an inter rater instrument while SRMEI is self-report. The second important feature of SRMEI lies in emotional expression. SRMEI also assesses the techniques of conveying emotions of an individual that affect a person's own self and his or her interpersonal relationships. And finally, ECI has four subscales whereas SRMEI has three main factors. These factors are:

a. Emotional Self-Regulation (ESR)

This factor comprises 27 items and represents alpha reliability of .94. It is composed of the competencies of trustworthiness self-control, adaptability, conscientiousness, initiative and achievement drive. The score on this factor ranges from 27 to 135. ESR also has 8 statements which overlap and were also rated for the factors of Emotional Self-Awareness (ESA) and Interpersonal Skills (IS). High score on this subscale represents high emotionally self-regulated individual.

b. Emotional Self-Awareness (ESA)

This subscale is composed of 21 statements with .87 alpha reliability and consist emotional capabilities of self-awareness, self-confidence and self-assessment. The score of this factor ranges from 21 to 105. This factor has 13 negatively worded and 8 positively phrased statements. This scale has 8 overlapping statements which are also rated in Emotional Self-Regulation and sub scale Interpersonal Skills. The person who gets high score on this factor will be considered as a highly emotionally self-aware person.

c. Interpersonal Skills (IS)

This factor is composed of 12 statement with Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .74. It shows social skills of a person which include emotional capabilities of service orientation, empathy, influence, developing others, communication and conflict management. The minimum score for this subscale is 12 while the highest score is 60. This consists of 1 negatively worded and 11 positively worded statement. Six statements overlap in this subscale and were rated for the subscales of ESR and ESA. An individual who gets high score on this scale is imagined to have concerns, better judgment of other's emotions, and needs, can help others in developing themselves, and tries to meet their needs.

To collect data from selected respondents; researchers personally visited the selected departments. The researchers requested to the department head to allow students to complete the questionnaire. The respondents were briefed that their responses would be kept confidential. The researchers distributed, explained the questionnaire to the students and directed them to complete the questionnaire. Students completed questionnaire on the spot.

Data analysis

Data were collected and were analyzed through SPSS by using independent sample t-test.

Results

Table 1
Comparison of (EI) on Gender Basis

| | Gender | N | Mean | SD | df | t | Mean Difference | Sig. |
|------------------------|--------|-----|----------|----------|-----|-------|-----------------|------|
| Emotional-Intelligence | Male | 113 | 214.7788 | 23.01426 | 178 | 3.697 | 12.08179 | .000 |
| | Female | 67 | 202.6970 | 17.28403 | | | | |

*Significant at $\alpha = .05$

The above table shows that $p < 0.05$ with mean value (214.79) of (EI) for male and female was (202.7) and t-value 3.697 so the null hypothesis was rejected and on gender basis, the difference was significant, and the male university students showed higher level of emotional intelligence than their female counterparts.

Factor wise comparison of emotional intelligence

Table 2

Comparison Between the Emotional Self-regulation on Gender Basis

| | Gender | N | Mean | SD | df | t | Mean Difference | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|------|--------|-----|---------|----------|-----|-------|-----------------|-----------------|
| ESRS | Male | 113 | 91.7876 | 14.45835 | 178 | 3.326 | 7.07119 | .001 |
| | Female | 67 | 84.7164 | 12.56475 | | | | |

*Significant at $\alpha = .05$

The above table showed this that $p < .05$ with mean score 91.7876 for male students and 84.7164 for female students. So there was significant difference between the emotional self-regulation with respect to gender. Hence the null hypothesis “There was no significant difference between the emotional self-regulation on gender basis” was rejected. It means the male university students reported that they were high level of emotionally self-regulated than their female counterparts.

Table 3

Comparison between the Emotional Self-awareness on the Basis of Gender

| | Gender | N | Mean | SD | df | T | Mean Difference | Sig. |
|-----|--------|-----|---------|---------|-----|-------|-----------------|------|
| ESA | Male | 113 | 75.8142 | 8.86662 | 177 | 3.244 | 4.10204 | .001 |
| | Female | 67 | 71.7121 | 6.77953 | | | | |

*Significant at $\alpha = .05$

The above table shows that $p < 0.05$ with mean value of emotional self-awareness for male was (75.8142) and female (71.7121), and t -value 3.244 so the null hypothesis “There was no significant difference between the emotional self-awareness on gender basis” was rejected. The greater mean score of male students shows their better level of emotional self-awareness as compared to their female counterpart.

Table 4

Comparison of Students' Interpersonal Skills on the Basis of Gender

| | Gender | N | Mean | SD | df | t | Mean Difference | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|----------------------|--------|-----|---------|---------|-----|------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Interpersonal skills | Male | 113 | 47.1770 | 6.28239 | 178 | .860 | .75908 | .391 |
| | Female | 67 | 46.4179 | 4.63566 | | | | |

Not significant at $\alpha = .05$

The above table shows that $p > .05$ with mean value of Interpersonal skills for male was (47.1170) and female (46.4179), and t -value .860 so the null hypothesis was accepted and there was no significant difference of interpersonal skills on gender basis. It means the level of interpersonal skills of male university students is equivalent to their female counterparts.

Discussions

Kafetsios (2004) found a statistically significant difference on gender basis with female scoring high on emotional intelligence. According to some studies girls have strong emotional intelligence than male (Patel, 2017). Rao and Komala (2017) asserts that in their study on youth the male showed higher emotional intelligence than female but the result was statistically non-significant. While according to other studies male had higher emotional intelligence than female (Ahmad, Bangash, & Khan, 2009). Naghavi, and Redzuan, (2011) have concluded that although female have shown greater emotional intelligence yet other studies have shown contradictory results, therefore more research was needed in this area. The results of this study contradict that of Kafetsios (2004) and Patel (2017). There was also a significant difference concerning emotional intelligence for males than females. While, it is in agreement with that of Rao and Komala (2017), males had higher emotional self-regulation than females (Ahmad, Bangash & Khan, 2009). Similarly male performed higher on emotional self-awareness than female students. On the basis of interpersonal skills no significant difference was found.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The aforementioned study showed that male had greater (EI) than female. Male university students had high level of emotionally self-regulation and emotional self-awareness than their female counter part. But in case of interpersonal skills, male and female university students were equivalent.

Based on the analysis of the results some recommendations were offered. It is recommended to the university authorities that they should arrange social and interactive activities where students interact and communicate with other students. Training programs for university teachers may be developed for the development emotional stability of students.

Suggestions

This study is conducted from the KPK province the study can be replicated from the other provinces. The results of the study showed that male had greater (EI) than female other studies can be conducted to explore the factors of greater EI of male students in comparison with female students. Other studies can be conducted on a larger population.

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