

A GENDER BASED COMPARISON: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE

To explore the difference in the level of emotional intelligence between school going boys and girls in Karachi, Pakistan.

STUDY DESIGN

Cross sectional research design.

PLACE AND DURATION OF STUDY

Data were collected from private schools of Karachi, Pakistan, from January 2019 to February 2019.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

The sample of this study was comprised of 600 school students from Karachi, Pakistan. Emotional Intelligence, Questionnaire for Adolescents (TEIQue-ASF) was used to collect the data.

RESULTS

The findings indicated a difference in the mean score of emotional intelligence of girls (141.95, SD= 19.67) and boys (139.64, SD= 17.56). The scores could not prove statistically significant difference between the emotional intelligence of girls and boys in Pakistan.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that there is no significant gender differences found in emotional intelligence.

KEY WORDS

EQ, EI, Teenage, Emotional quotient.

INTRODUCTION

In last many years, a number of studies have been conducted on this topic. Petrides and Adrian found that the EQ among males was higher as compare with females¹. Another study on EQ found that females scored higher on domains of genuine and Social Skill as compare with males. Meanwhile, on the whole there was a slight difference among genders that can be negligible².

Another study found fundamental gender differences in EQ. They suggested that nature of factors is the major contributor in the difference of EQ level among both genders. Overall this research concluded that females generally had higher EQ as compare with males, but the self-opinion and self-perception of males were totally opposite³.

As Goleman described there are some specific areas of EQ where female give more prominent output as compare with males such as relationship skills⁴. Generally, the assumption about female gender is that they have high EQ than male gender; while for IQ males have higher scores.

In the daily task we always try to balance our emotions making them stable. Persons who have the ability of emotional control are recognized by others around them as distinct in dealing with challenges in their social and professional environment due to their better level of both mental and physical health; this ability is termed as Emotional Intelligence (EQ)⁵ by different psychologist.

EQ is well Defined by Salovey and Mayer as the ability of social intelligence of an individual and his/her capacity to the monitor feelings and emotions in different situation and ability to differentiate them from one another in order to use this information to guide one's thinking and action. EQ is referred by Goleman as the capacity of an individual to recognize his or her own feeling as well as others, this understanding of feeling and emotion is used for the motivation of themselves and others in maintaining healthy relationship⁶. Furthermore, Rhodes defined that EQ is evidently different from Standard Intelligence, or I.Q.⁷

Gender differences are defined as the visible and remarkable differences between male and female in any variable; for current research in emotional intelligence. In the last few decades many researchers had focused on the gender differences in EQ with self-reported or performance measures of EQ. It is also evidenced by Schutte and colleagues² that in EQ testing female scored higher than male. Harrod and Scheer's research found that there was a significant difference between males and females in EQ; females scored slightly higher than males.⁸ The aim of the study is to explore the difference in the level of emotional intelligence between school going boys and girls.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

Participants

The total sample comprised of 600 students (300 boys and 300 girls) aged between 13 to 16 years ($M = 14$ years, $SD = 1.15$). All were selected from private Schools of Karachi, Pakistan. The present research was quantitative in nature and cross-sectional research design was used. The sample of this research was collected through simple random sampling technique.

Instruments

The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire for Adolescents (TEIQue-ASF) developed by Petrides and Furnham (2001) Urdu version by Zia, Khan & Shazad (2015)⁹ has been used in this research for data collection purpose. It has a seven point Likert-type scale ranging from completely disagree (scored 1) to completely agree (scored 7).

Procedure

Permission was taken from ethical review committee; afterwards permission was reserved from the authors of the scales to use the instruments in this research. Consent was sought from the participant after explaining the nature and purpose of the study. Rapport was developed with the participants, before administering the questionnaire and the demographic information sheet in order to get information regarding their age, gender, education, and institutional details.. They were assured that all the information would be kept confidential. They were acknowledged for their participation and cooperation in the study.

RESULTS

Data was collected from 600 adolescents (300 girls and 300 boys). Table 1 showed that the adolescents were studying in class 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Majority of the respondents were studying in class 6, 7 and 8 (64.50%). Table 1 also showed the distribution of respondent's birth order and siblings, it is evident that most of the adolescents have birth order 1 to 3 (76.6%), there were quit few (2.50%) with birth order 7 or more.

Table 1
Demographic information

		N	%
Gender	Male	300	50
	Female	300	50
Class	6-7-8	387	64.50
	9-10	213	35.5
Birth order	1-3	459	76.6
	4-6	126	21.30
	7 or more	15	2.50
Siblings	0-3	298	49.66
	4-6	272	45.33
	7 or more	30	5

Table 2
Characteristics of demographic information about adolescents' parents

		n	%
Father's Qualification	Middle	52	8.7
	Matric	146	24.3
	Inter	123	20.5
	Bachelor	154	25.7
	Masters or higher	84	14
	None	41	6.8
Mother's Qualification	Middle	69	11.5
	Matric	150	25
	Inter	147	24.5
	Bachelor	111	18.5
	Masters or higher	50	8.3
	None	73	12.2
Father's Occupation	Private Job	566	94.3
	Govt Job	34	5.7
Mother's Occupation	House wife	532	88.7
	Part time	43	7.2
	Full time	25	4.2

Adolescents' parents' characteristics are presented in table 2. It was noted that 24.3% and 20.5% fathers were matriculate and intermediate respectively, one fourth were graduate and only 14% fathers had master degree. Mothers' qualification was not notably different from fathers, there were 12.2% illiterate mothers. 18.5% and 8.3% mothers had bachelor and master degree respectively. Almost all fathers (94.3%) had private job. It was observed that majority of the mothers (88.7%) were house wives.

In reliability analysis the Cronbach's alpha was in acceptable range ($\alpha .84$) for Trait Emotional Intelligence Scale (Urdu), hence, the TEI scale is reliable for this study.

Table 3
Reliability Analysis of Trait Emotional Intelligence Scale (Urdu Version)

Scale	No Items	Cronbach's alpha
Trait Emotional Intelligence Scale (Urdu)	30	.84

($N=600$)

Table 4
Difference between genders on variable of Emotional Intelligence

	Adolescent Girls	Adolescent Boys	t	df	p
Emotional intelligence	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)		598	0.130
	141.95 (19.67)	139.64 (17.56)	1.517		

* p -value ≤ 0.05 considered as significant (t -test)

Table 4 illustrated that girls ($M=141.95$, $SD=19.67$) and Boys ($M=139.64$, $SD=17.56$) did not show a statistically significant difference in their emotional Intelligence, $t(598) = 1.517$, $p = 0.130$.

DISCUSSION

The hypothesis of this research states that "There is a significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence between girls and boys". Table 3 presented in the results section revealed that the difference in mean emotional intelligence between girls and boys is minimally higher for girls. Mean values for emotional intelligence of girls and boys came out to be 141.95 with standard deviation of 19.67 and 139.64 with standard deviation of 17.56 respectively. However, the difference of these means is found to be statistically insignificant with a p-value of 0.130. Although, the outcome of this research is found to be statistically insignificant but evidence from the existing literature is available both for and against the hypothesis.

A research study conducted by Katyal and Awasthi (2005)¹⁰ revealed that girls tend to have higher emotional intelligence than boys. One of the most common reason for this variation in emotional intelligence is based on the notion that girls are more emotionally adjusted and are more vulnerable to emotional trauma (Katyal and Awasthi, 2005).¹⁰ This way they are able to quickly learn to regulate their emotions as well as to enhance their social skills by the time they reach adolescences. Another reason might be based on the fact that girls are commonly extra sensitive emotionally and are also able to express their emotions appropriately leading to a clear perceptive and higher emotional empathy than boys (Katyal and Awasthi, 2005).¹⁰ Hence, leading to an increased level of emotional intelligence than normally acknowledged. Similar outcomes have been concluded by Charbonneau and Nicol (2002)¹¹ who have expressed that the believed idea of girls being more emotional than boys and the social factors that play its part in the upbringing of girls in most societies around the world makes it possible that girls do have higher emotional intelligence.

On the contrary, there is some research evidence that also suggests otherwise. One famous scholar has contested this notion and has articulated that it is a common perception above all that girls are more emotionally intelligent and in fact, both genders tend to have similar levels of emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 2006).¹²

Furthermore, there are a high number of research studies that have been conducted over the years that have emphasized on the variations that have occurred during the last few decades and its impact on culture, society and the educational system around the globe. The research works have advocated for the notion that these emotional intelligence differences based on gender are becoming less and less variable with each passing year and that uniform socio-cultural values and education for both genders can span out any emotional variations based on gender.^{13,14} Although, these research studies does suggest that girls have a considerably higher levels of emotional empathy and boys have higher levels of self-concept but, they also focused on extraversion, openness and conscientiousness as major emotional intelligence indicators^{13,14}.

In addition to these research studies and arguments, there is another point that is vital to the subject under investigation. The relationship of adolescents with their parents and the gender of the parent might be the one that leads to higher emotional intelligence above all¹⁵⁻¹⁷.

There are some conclusions that indicate that daughters have better relationship with mothers and sons tend to have rough relationships especially around adolescence years leading to fractured emotional

growth¹⁵⁻¹⁷. But, it is also important according to these researchers that each parent-child relationship is unique in its own way and cannot be compared to other one.¹⁵⁻¹⁷

Lastly, there are research studies that have proven in different social and cultural settings that there is not much variation in the mean emotional intelligence of girls and boys. Some research studies conducted on the topic of gender influence of emotional intelligence concluded that there is insufficient evidence in this regard to prove any major impact (Brackett et al., 2006).¹⁸ In a similar way, results of this research study also reported a mean emotional intelligence value of 141.95 for girls and mean emotional intelligence value of 139.64 for boys with a sample size of 300 girls and 300 boys.

The current results are in line with most of the previous findings which suggest that there might not be much impact of adolescent's gender on emotional intelligence after all.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that there is no significant gender differences found in the level of emotional intelligence.


SUGGESTIONS

- The current study primarily based on the sample that was taken from one city of Pakistan.
- Future research needs to be replicated with more diverse population and sample.

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