

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIGH EMOTIONAL  
INTELLIGENCE AND GREATER SELF - ESTEEM.**

**MUSARRAT ALAM KHAN**  
Clinical Psychologist

**ALIYA IQBAL**  
University of Karachi

**NAUSHEEN TARIQ**  
Hilal-E-Ahmer

**ZAINAB FOTOWATT ZADEH**  
Insitute of Professional Psychology  
Bahria University

**ABSTRACT**

The existence of high EI to greater self-esteem was compared. It was hypothesized that higher EI would lead to greater self - esteem among adolescents. Two questionnaires tapping both the variables were administered to a sample of 314 adolescents comprising of 157 males and 157 females. In order to find out the relationship between the two variables Pearson r was applied. The results showed that there is a moderate relationship between the two variables ( $r= 0.5$ ).

**INTRODUCTION**

In the past decade there has been an increased recognition of the significant role that self - esteem plays in a person's development. Motivation and performance in school and in sports, the quality of peer relationships, the abuse of drugs and alcohol, teenage pregnancy, the willingness or lack of willingness to persevere at various tasks, and the capacity to be resilient and bounce back from adversity and failure are

all influenced by how people feel and think about themselves and how they view their competencies (Branden, 1987). Thus it is difficult to imagine any activity or behavior in which people are engaged that is not impacted by the child's self-esteem.

Self-esteem can be defined in a number of ways. Many definitions and conceptualizations overlap, focusing on what individuals think and feel about themselves and their abilities to accomplish different tasks (Frey, Carlock, 1989; Harter, 1990). Self-esteem can be defined not only in terms of "appreciating my own worth and importance" but also "having character to be accountable for myself and to act responsibly towards others". The concept of self-esteem may be seen as embracing the feelings and beliefs that individuals have pertaining to their competence and worth, to learn their abilities to make a difference, to confront and master challenges, to learn from both success and failure, and to treat themselves and others with respect (Brooks, 1991). A question is often raised as to why some children and adolescents develop high self-esteem, whereas others are burdened by insecurity and doubt. The answer is complex. Certainly, childhood experiences play a crucial role in the emergence of self-esteem, but other variables contribute as well. One may notice that the kinds of mismatches between parents (teachers, other adults) and children are sources of anger and disappointment. In such conditions it is not surprising to find children who believe they have let others down, that they are failures, or that others are unkind to them. Low self-esteem is a common outcome unless parents are able to lessen the effects of the mismatch by being more empathetic, by understanding and appreciating their child's unique style and needs, and by modifying their own expectations and reactions in a direction that is more in accordance with

their child's temperament. If children and adolescents experience self-doubt and failure in many situations, especially those that they judge to be important to significant others, their overall sense of competence and confidence is low. Thus, one can safely state that self-esteem plays a central role in the lives of all the people. As Branden (1987) has noted: "Apart from problems that are biological in origin, I cannot think of a single psychological difficulty...That is not traceable to poor self-esteem. Of all the judgments we pass, none is as important as the one we pass on ourselves. Positive self-esteem is a cardinal requirement of a fulfilling life."

Recognition of the importance of self-esteem in a child's development and capacity for resilience has stimulated efforts to identify the main variables associated with self-esteem with a view to designing interventions likely to reinforce a child's sense of competence and self-worth. So far as successes are concerned, children with high self-esteem apparently perceive them as predicted in large part on their own efforts, resources and abilities. These children assume realistic ownership for their achievements and possess a sense of personal control over what is transpiring in their lives. In terms of failure and mistakes, children with high self-esteem typically believe that mistakes are experiences from which to learn rather than occasion of defeat. They attribute mistakes to factors that can be changed, such as lack of adequate effort or an unrealistic goal. Children with low self-esteem, on the other hand, are prone to believe that they cannot correct the situation.

If observed closely all these ways of dealing with success and failure may give rise to another variable, which is related to how well an individual can adjust to and handle life's ups and downs. This concept of dealing



effectively with life's problems and excitements intelligently is called emotional intelligence. Being a new notion, the term Emotional Intelligence first appeared in a series of academic articles authored by Mayer and Salovey (1993). This concept of emotional intelligence is an umbrella term that captures a broad collection of individual skills and dispositions, usually referred to as soft skills or inter and intra-personal skills, that are outside the traditional areas of specific knowledge, general intelligence and technical or professional skills. Bar-On (1997), defines emotional intelligence as "An array of personal, emotional, and social competencies and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures". Most of the authors on the topic note that in order to be a well adjusted, fully functioning member of society (or family member, spouse, employee, etc.), one must possess both traditional intelligence (IQ) and emotional intelligence (dubbed EI). Emotional intelligence involves being aware of emotional and how they can affect and interact with traditional intelligence (e.g., impair or enhance judgment, etc.). This view fits well with the commonly held notion that it takes more than just brains to succeed in life. It includes the ability to (a) accurately perceive one's own and others' emotions, (b) exercise mastery over one's own emotions and respond with appropriate (i.e., realistic, undistorted, and adaptive) emotions and behaviors in various life situations, (c) enter into relationship where honest statement of emotions is balanced against courtesy, consideration, and respect, (d) select work that is emotionally rewarding, thereby avoiding procrastination, self-doubt, and low achievement, and (e) balance work, home, and recreational life. In short, it is an array of non-cognitive abilities and competencies that influence a person's ability to cope with environmental demands and pressures.

Bar-On began researching a comprehensive concept of emotional intelligence in 1980. He measures the following components of EQ: (i)

intrapersonal components; Emotional Self-Awareness; Self-Regard; Self-Actualization; and independence. (ii) Interpersonal components: Empathy; Interpersonal Relationship; and Social Responsibility. (iii) Adaptability component; Problem Solving; Reality Testing; and Flexibility. (iv) Stress management component: Stress Tolerance; and impulse Control. (v) General Mood component; Happiness, and Optimism.

Social scientists conclude that EI is perhaps best observed in people described as either pessimists or optimists. Optimists have high EI and treat obstacles as minor, while the pessimistic low-EI group personalizes all setback. In social research circles, high EI denotes one's ability to survive, and it's here that there may be an overlap between EI, IQ, genetics and environment. In this regard, one is reminded of the words of Darwin, "The biggest, the smartest, and the strongest are not the survivors. Rather, the survivors are the most adaptable." Those of us who survive and thrive in this complex world are not only the most adaptable, but also appear to be the most optimistic and the most likely to have high EI.

In working with Emotional Intelligence, Goleman applies the emotional intelligence concept to the workplace setting. In this analysis he argues that the emotionally intelligent worker is skilled in two key areas he presents in his emotional competence framework. These are "personal competence" - how we manage ourselves, and "social competence" - how we manage relationships.

A question may arise whether emotional intelligence is as important as claimed? Can the concept be successfully applied to all the areas of personality development? Is there any difference in EI of males and females? Does differences in EI of males and females leads to any

change in the self - esteem also? At present, there is little in the way of published, fundamental research that examines whether emotional intelligence (EI) is an important variable like its counterpart intelligence quotient (IQ). However, this is a very interesting and potentially powerful area that bears watching.

The current study is therefore, an attempt to further investigate the role of emotional intelligence in a person's life and to relate this new concept with person's self - esteem and to see whether EI plays any significant role in person's high or low self - esteem. It was therefore, hypothesized that adolescents with higher EI would exhibit greater self - esteem.

## METHOD

### Particepants:

It consisted of 314 adolescents (out of which 157 were males and 157 were females). Their ages ranged from 13 - 19 years and they belonged to different schools of Karachi.

### Procedure:

To find out the level of emotional intelligence and its relation to self-esteem, two separate questionnaires were developed. For the preparation of self - esteem questionnaire, items were picked from the standardized test for measuring self - esteem (Cultural Free Self - Esteem Inventory)

and the standard scoring method was used. Issues such as personal worth, social self - esteem and a global self view or belief in one's capabilities were the target areas tapped by this questionnaire. EI is relatively a novel concept, therefore, standardized tests are not available. For this purpose a whole new questionnaire was developed by picking items from the tests available on the internet. Issues like emotional stability, control over emotions; coping up with life stressors; acceptance of people's attitude in general and optimism were studied by this questionnaire. These concepts were selected from a general definition of EI. Both of these questionnaires comprised of 20 statements each and were individually administered, to which the subject had to respond by writing 'yes' or a 'no'. Standard procedure was developed for scoring each individual score and was followed through out. Since both the self - esteem and especially the EI questionnaire was constructed for study purpose specifically, a petite pilot study was done on a group of 15 adolescents (both males and females).

To find out the degree of relationship between EI and self - esteem, Product Moment Co-efficient Correlation was applied.

## RESULTS

Table I

Correlation between EI (X) and Self - Esteem (Y) of Adolescents

N = 314

EX	EY	EX <sup>2</sup>	EY <sup>2</sup>	EXY
3622	4173	47978	59707	51112
$r_{xy} = 0.5$				

Table II

Mean score of the EI and Self - Esteem of Adolescents

N = 314

EI	Self - Esteem
11.53	13.28

Table III

Mean score of the EI of Males and Females

N = 314

Males	Females
11.47	11.59

Table IV:

Mean score of the Self - Esteem of Males and Females

N = 314

Males	Females
13.4	13.5



Table V

Correlation between EI (X) and Self - Esteem (Y) of Females

N = 157

EX	EY	EX <sup>2</sup>	EY <sup>2</sup>	EXY
1820	2128	23198	30416	25283
$r_{xy} = + 0.5$				

Table VI

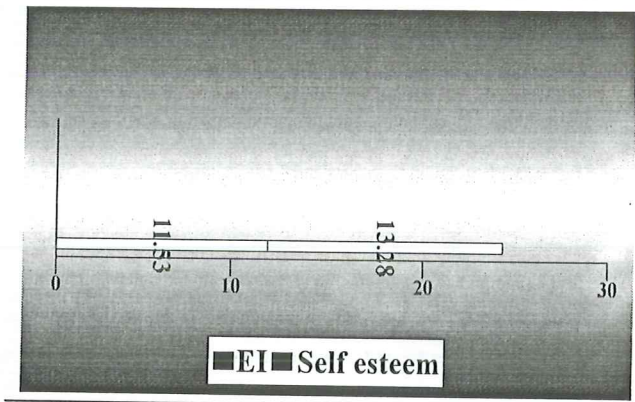
Correlation between EI (X) and Self - Esteem (Y) of Males

N = 157

EX	EY	EX <sup>2</sup>	EY <sup>2</sup>	EXY
1802	2115	22874	30247	25049
$r_{xy} = + 0.4$				

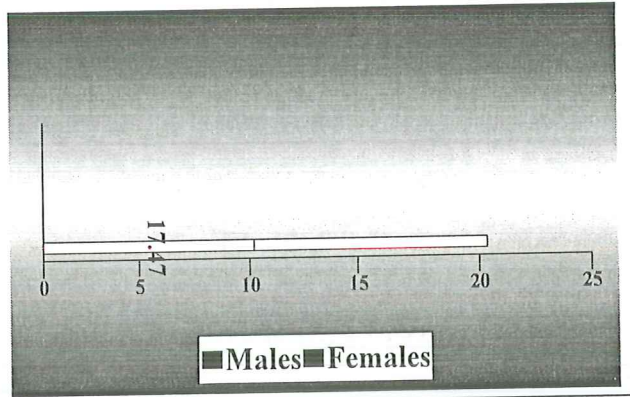
Graph # I

Mean score of the EI and self - Esteem of Adolescents



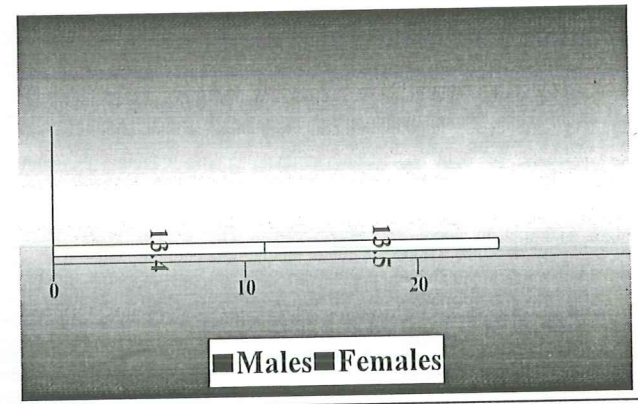
Graph # II

Mean score of the EI of Males and Females



Graph # III

Mean score of the Self - Esteem of Males and Females



DISCUSSION

As indicated by the Table I & Graph I there is a moderate relation between higher EI and greater Self-esteem ( $r = 0.5$ ). From the results it can be inferred that EI can be regarded as one of the factors responsible for a person's greater self - esteem. A person with high self - esteem perceives himself, herself as better, more capable, and of greater worth than does someone with low self - esteem.

When the needs for being loved and loving others have been reasonably gratified, their motivating force diminishes, paving way for self - esteem need. Satisfaction of the self - esteem needs generates feelings and attitudes of self - confidence, self worth, capability, and the sense of being useful and necessary in the world. In contrast, the frustration of these needs leads to feelings and attitude of inferiority, weakness, passivity and dependency. These negative self - perceptions, in turn, may give rise to basic discouragement, a sense of futility and hopelessness in dealing with life's demands, and a low re - evaluation of self vis-a-vis others. Children who are denied of their need for respect and recognition are particularly prone to acquiring a poor self - image (Coopersmith, 1976). However, the only difference lies within the factorial approach of the concept itself, "like females seem to have stronger interpersonal components than men, but men, on the other hand, have a higher intrapersonal capacity and are more adaptable. More specifically, women are more aware of their emotions, show more empathy, relate better interpersonally and are more socially responsible than men; men appear to have better self - regard, are more independent, solve problems better, are more flexible and cope better with stress." Men and women therefore, have different kinds and levels of Emotional Intelligence, though there exists no significant difference as such. The present study's results also suggest the same idea as the

observed mean scores for both the genders EI is 11.47 for Males and 11.59 (Table No. III) for Females presenting the idea that there does not exist any significant difference between males and females EI. The results of the present study (Table No V & VI) show that the relationship between the EI and self - esteem of females and males separately depicts a moderate relationship i.e. 0.5 & 0.4 respectively. Not only that but if both the variables are compared separately for males and females, there is not much of a difference between the two (Table III & IV).

Thus it indicates that on one hand, high EI leads to a greater self - esteem and on the other hand it is not affected much by gender differences. This is to say that whoever possesses a high EI would also have a fair amount of self - esteem regardless of the gender. Table II along with Graph No I gives the combined picture and very clearly presents the idea that if groups are not divided on the basis of gender the observed means for EI of the group is 11.5 and observed mean for Self esteem of the group is 13.2, accordingly presenting the idea that if one variable i.e. EI is high the other variable i.e. Self esteem will also be high, thus showing that both are positively correlated with each other. The findings of the current research coincide with the researches done in the western countries. Bar-on (1997) found that there is no difference in the EI of males and females.

The present study also gives the same result as Table No III shows that the mean difference observed between males and females EI is 11.47 & 11.59 which is more or less the same thus coinciding with the finding of Bar (1997).



Thus, whether it is EI in males and females or the resulting self-esteem, a person needs to know that he or she is worthwhile - capable of mastering tasks and challenges in life. Respect from others entails such concerns as desires for prestige, recognition, reputation, status, appreciation and acceptance. When a person is able to deal effectively with his / her problems, it enhances the feeling of worth. This effective handling of problems is done through the person's emotional stability. Emotional stability in short, refers to emotional intelligence.

At a minimum the emotional intelligence concept is useful for learning about the role of emotions in work and everyday life and how interpersonal relationships affect work and organizational performance, and should prove useful for personal development and insight. This research, is just a beginning to examine one of these issues in depth. A lot of areas still need to be researched upon to study the factorial components of EI and their relationship to any other variable. Additionally, it is also possible that Emotional Intelligence, once better understood, will show a relationship to more generally accepted measures of personality. Indeed, EI may turn out to be a subset of personality that can be assessed by instruments that have already been well validated.

#### REFERENCES

- Bar-On, R. (1997). EQ - ii, Bar - On Emotional Quotient Inventory: User's Manual. Toronto: Multi - Health System Inc.
- Branden, No. (1987). The Psychology of Self - esteem, New York: Bantam Books.

KHAN ET AL.

- Branden, N. (1987). *How to raise your Self - esteem*. NY: Bantam Books.
- Brooks, R. B. (1991). *The Self Esteem Teacher Circle*, Pines MN, American Guidance Service.
- Coopersmith, S. (1976). *The antecedents of self - esteem*, San Francisco: Freeman.
- Frey, D., Carlock, C.J. (1989). *Enhancing Self - esteem. Accelerated development*. Muncie, Inc.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Harter, S. (1990). *Development difference in the nature of Self-representations: implication for the understanding, assessment and treatment of maladaptive behavior*. *Cognitive Therapy and research*.
- Mayer, J. D. & Salovey, P. (1993). *Emotional Intelligence* Bloomsbury Publishing London.
- Mayer, J. D. & Salovey, P. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence and the construction and regulation of feelings*. *Applied & Preventive Psychology*.