

A GENDER COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN EMPLOYEES OF MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES OF KARACHI

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the difference between the emotional intelligence of males and females. The sample consisted of 50 individuals divided into two groups of 25 males and 25 females respectively, employed with five multinational organizations in Karachi, Pakistan; designated at the higher and middle management levels. It was predicted that men will score higher on emotional intelligence (EI) scale than women. For quantitative analysis, the t-test was applied. Findings did not reveal any significant difference in the mean comparative scores of the two groups.

INTRODUCTION

People endowed with emotional skills excel in life, perhaps more than those with high intelligence (IQ). In other words, it takes more than traditional cognitive intelligence to be successful at work. The higher people move up in the company the more crucial emotional intelligence becomes and the real value of the growing work on emotional intelligence is its implications for workplace training (Goleman, 1995).

Emotional intelligence as characterized by Salovey and Mayer (1990) is a cognitive ability which “involves the abilities to perceive, appraise and express emotions; the ability to access and or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. Thus it entails four aspects: (1) perceive or sense emotions (2) Use emotions to assist thought (3) Understand emotions (4) Manage emotions. This model is considered to be the first model of emotional intelligence and the theory holds that social and emotional skills are a form of intelligence just as academic skills.

Usefulness of emotional intelligence in industrial setting is evident from the research of Langley (2000). It had comparisons of emotional intelligence competencies in senior and middle managers, which showed that senior managers scored significantly higher in the personal competencies of emotional awareness, innovation, commitment and the social competencies of political awareness, leadership, change catalyst and team work.

Moreover, seventy-six (76) leading CEOs in Ontario belonging to Innovators Alliances, a CEO knowledge network of innovative, accelerated

growth firms, were assessed using EQ-i. Overall, the group scored slightly higher than average on total EQ. In order from most above the norm to least, the group scored above average on independence, assertiveness, optimism, self actualization, and self regard. Below average scores were obtained for interpersonal relationships and impulse control. The results of the same study suggest that there are gender differences in emotional intelligence as well. Female CEOs scored significantly higher than their male counter parts on the interpersonal skills. However, men outperform women on stress tolerance and self-confidence measures. In other words, women and men are equally as intelligent emotionally, but they are strong in different areas (Stein, 2002).

It is a commonly held belief that men and women treat their emotions in different ways. Men are thought of as less emotional than women and more inclined to use logic and reason when dealing with daily stresses. However, a growing body of research has demonstrated that it is not quite this simple. Fischer (2000) proposed that stereotypes about individual emotions are gender-specific. The emotions of happiness, sadness and fear are believed to be more characteristic of women, whereas anger has been found to be more characteristic of men (Birnbaum & Noasonchuk , 1980; Briton & Hall, 1995; Fabes & Martin, 1991; Grossman & Wood, 1993; Kelly & Hutson-Comeaux, 1999). Thus, the difference between males and females is magnified by the stereotypes of differing gender roles that men and women play in the culture. Researches also suggest that men prefer a problem-focused, rather than emotion-focused approach to stressful situations they encounter (Ptacek, Smith & Dodge, 1984; Ben-Zur & Zeidner, 1996; Twenge, 1997).

In a study by Petride & Furnham (2000) differences in measured and self-estimated trait emotional intelligence. Two hundred and sixty

predominantly white participants completed a measure of trait emotional intelligence (EI) and estimated their scores on 15 EI facets on a normal distribution with 100 points as the mean and 15 points as a standard deviation. Females scored higher than males on the "social skills" factor of measured trait EI. However, when the 15 facets of self-estimated EI were combined into a single reliable scale and the participants's measured trait EI scores were held constant, it was demonstrated that males believed they had higher emotional intelligence (EI) than females. Most of the correlations between measured and self-estimated scores were significant and positive, thereby indicating that people have some insight into their EI. Correlations between measured and self-estimated scores were generally higher for males than females, and a regression analysis indicated that gender was a significant predictor of self-estimated emotional intelligence (EI).

As far as studies of emotional intelligence in Pakistan are concern, so far there are few published articles on emotional intelligence (EI) in the psychological journals. A study conducted by Shafi & Farooq (2003) indicates that there is no gender gap between girls with low emotional intelligence whose performance is parallel to boys who have low emotional intelligence, whereas, girls with high emotional intelligence perform similar to boys who possess high emotional intelligence. One more research on relationship between emotional intelligence and self esteem among adolescents suggests the same idea that no significant difference exist in the overall emotional intelligence scores of both the genders. (Khan, Iqbal, Tariq & Zadeh, 2006)

The purpose of the present study is to establish a comparative understanding of Emotional intelligence (EI) in men and women employees. In recent years there has been a great influx of female business and management graduates in multinational companies of Karachi. Females at the work have

to take dual pressures from house as well as job and also have to deal with gender specific stereotypes about individual emotions at work place. Hence it would be interesting to compare the emotional intelligence of both the genders working at multinational companies in Karachi and find the answer to the question that; is there any significant difference observed in both the genders when it comes to emotional processing at work place?

Considering Pakistani culture and literature review it was hypothesized that “men will score higher on emotional intelligence scale as compared to women”; as this was the most plausible explanation of a male dominated society, where men have worked at a professional level for longer and far more consistently than women.

METHOD

Participants:

Sample consisted of 50 individuals divided into two groups of 25 participants from each gender from five Multinational Organizations designated at the higher and middle management levels, in the respective organizations. Educational level of the employees was Graduation and Post Graduation.

Measures:

Emotional Intelligence Scale:

For the purpose of measuring emotional intelligence a 33 items emotional intelligence scale as developed by Schutte, Malouff, Hall, Haggerty, Cooper, Golden, and Dornheim (1998) was used (see Appendix A). The author of this questionnaire carried out a variety of studies in establishing the 33 items scale. This short scale measures all 4 aspects of EI, i.e.; (1) to

perceive or sense emotions (2) use emotions to assist thought (3) understand emotions (4) manage emotions. The questionnaire contains a 5 point rating scale (**strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree and strongly agree**) with higher scores indicating a higher level of emotional intelligence.

A Cronbach's alpha of .87 was found for internal consistency of the scale. Also, a two week test retest showed reliability of .78. The scale also showed evidence of validity as scores on the scale are shown to be related to eight of nine measures predicted to be related to emotional intelligence (Schutte et al., 1998).

Procedure:

For the study sample, individuals designated at the upper and middle management level were contacted personally through the Human Resource Department. They were briefed about the nature of the study. They were assured of the confidentiality of their response. For the purpose of quantitative analysis t-test was applied.

RESULTS

Table. No. 1
Gender Comparison of Emotional Intelligence in Employees of Multinational Companies

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	df	t	P >0.05
Males	124.920	25	9.344	48	-0.073	Not Significant
Females	125.840	25	11.592			

DISCUSSION

It was hypothesized that men will score higher on emotional intelligence (EI) scale than women. The statistical analysis as shown in table No. 1 reveals that the two genders do not differ significantly in term of emotional intelligence ($t = -.073$, $df= 48$, $p >.05$).

These findings tend to support previous research findings by Goleman (1998) who suggested that there is no significant difference observed in the overall emotional intelligence of both the genders. However, males and females vary only in the way they manage and express their emotions.

Furthermore, Table No. 1 also indicates that the difference between the mean scores of emotional intelligence of men (124.92) and women (125.84) as indicated by this study is not in expected direction despite of gender specific stereotypes about individual emotions prevailing in Pakistani culture. The results of this study also suggest that women have a standard deviation of 11 in turn increasing their average range, whereas men have a

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standard deviation of 9 suggesting their average range is more or less consistent in that multinational company. This shows that women express their emotions in a larger variety.

It can be safely concluded from the findings of the present research that women are equally, endowed in this area of professionalism, they too can manage emotions, use them to assist thought, understand, perceive and sense them equally, effectively as men in this arena. In this culture where women have other roles to play with a demanding household influences it is enlightening to see that females are able to manage their professional role effectively.

For more conclusive results, it is recommended that in future the topic should be studied with larger sample size.

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APPENDIX 'A'

1. I know when to speak about my personal problems
2. When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcome them.
3. I expect that I will do on most things I try
4. Other people find it easy to confide in me
5. I find it hard to understand the non verbal messages of other people
6. Some of the major events in my life have led me to reevaluate what is important and not important
7. When my mood changes, I see new possibilities.
8. Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth growing
9. I am aware of my emotions as I experience them.
10. I expect good things to happen
11. I like to share my emotions with others.
12. When I experience a positive emotion I know how to make it last.
13. I arrange events other enjoy
14. I seek out activities that make me happy
15. I am aware of the non verbal messages I send to others
16. I present myself in a way that makes good impression on others.
17. When I am in positive mood, solving problems is easy for me.
18. By looking at their facial expression, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing
19. I know why emotions change.
20. When I am in positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas.
21. I have control over my emotions.
22. I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them.
23. I motivate myself by imaging a good outcome to tasks I take on.
24. I compliment others when they have done something well.
25. I am aware of the non verbal messages other people sent.
26. When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself.
27. When I feel change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas.
28. When I am faced with challenges, I give up because I believe I will fail.
29. I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them
30. I help other people feel better when they are down.
31. I use good mood to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles.
32. I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice.
33. It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do.

(Scoring key: sum of all items (item 5, 28 and 33 reversed scored)