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# Emotional Intelligence And Self-Esteem: A Brief Inquiry

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## ABSTRACT

It is imperative to have an understanding of one's emotions to function in all aspects of life. In order to explore its underpinnings for student population, this study explored the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among undergraduate students. Sample of (N=150) students (18-28years; M=21.54&SD=2.63) recruited from universities of Karachi through convenience sampling and scales of Self-Esteem (Rosenberg, 1965) and Emotional Intelligence (Schutte et al., 1998) were administered. Results showed a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and self-esteem ( $r=.445^{**}$ ,  $p<.01$ ), and meaningful gender differences for variables, men were found to have higher self-esteem ( $t= -2.015$ ,  $df= 149$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and women exhibited significantly higher levels of emotional intelligence ( $t= -2.012$ ,  $df= 149$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Implications and limitations of study were discussed.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence (EI), Self –Esteem, Gender, Undergraduate Students

## INTRODUCTION

In today's world, emotional intelligence (EI) is a common denominator for achievements and possesses the utmost significance in every sphere of life (Carmeli et al., 2007). Holistic success involves intellectual as well as EI (Sulaiman,2013). EI defines "The ability to recognize the meanings of emotions and their relationships, and to reason and solve based on them. EI is involved in the capacity to perceive emotions, assimilate emotion-related

feelings, understand the information of those emotions, and manage them” (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 1999, pp. 267). EI is a precursor for several positive psychological features. Yost and Tucker (2000) affirm linkages of emotional intelligence with a decreased rate of depression, improved mental health functioning, self-esteem, and responsible for good teamwork capabilities.

Self-esteem is conceptualized as a holistic worthy feelings and competence or sense of personal acceptance, value, and kindness (Coopersmith, 1967; Lyubomirsky et al, 2006; Rosenberg, 1965) High self-esteem and positive mood states linked with EI (Schutte, Simunek, Mc Kenley, & Hollander, 2002). Self-esteem is responsible for academic and employment success, happiness, and interpersonal harmony (Redenbach, 1991). Attention to investigate plausible linkages between EI and the self-regard of pupils is evident from numerous studies. Research showed a positive correlation between EI and the self-esteem of students in Pakistan (Bibi, Saqlain, & Mussawar, 2016). Positive linkage has been reported between EI and self-esteem (Country & Chester (2005). Nnabuike, Chukwuemeka, Chinwendu, Ephraim, and Ikechukwu (2018) obtained a positive connection between EI, self-worth, and other variables of age, global emotional intelligence, emotion perception, and management among graduate students. Studies showed a positive relationship between EI and self-esteem (Country & Chester, 2005; Bibi et al, 2016; shamsaei et al, 2017) whereas another study revealed no association between EI and self-esteem of undergraduates (Jennabadi, 2014).

Studies demonstrate gender variations in EI and self-esteem among pupils (Abbas, 2011). Females score high on EI than males (Brody & Hall, 2000; Ciarrochi, Hynes, & Crittenden, 2005; Katyal Awasthi &, 2005; Hall & Mast, 2008;) except the study of (Jennabadi, 2014) showed no gender differences exist for the score of EI apart from some elevated values in subscales of EI whereas some suggested that under graduate males possess high self-esteem than females (King et al., 1999; Nupur & Mahapatro, 2016; Zeinvand, 2006).

Pronounced EI assists in developing resources, gathering new insights, and learning novel information which expands potentials to utilize talents (Ciarrochi, Forgas & Mayer, 2006). EI is a predetermining factor for academic improvements; greater EI is linked with educational success, social and emotional adaptation (Petrides et al., 2004). Individuals with greater self-esteem consider themselves useful and capable individuals (Yahaya & Ahmad, 2006). EI and self-esteem are interrelated variables for students and investigated as important factors for academic success, interventions to improve emotional maturity as considered as an important aspect of educational curriculum (Tajpreet, 2015).

Shah, Nazir and Zamir (2019) from Pakistan have compared school going pupil and reported strong positive correlation between EI and Self Esteem along with significant gender differences in both variables. Both of these variables play a vital role in healthy personality development of individuals who are the foundation of social capital of the country. Thus, it is crucial to study where our young adults stand so that collective efforts for the betterment can be expanded by the stakeholders. Another study by Bibi et. al. (2020) conducted on EI and aggression highlighted no gender differences for emotional intelligences from the twin cities of Pakistan. They also discussed how findings regarding gender difference with respect to Emotional intelligence have been inconsistent. Mehmood and Gulzar (2004) when studying EI with depression and self-esteem on the students have also found that EI is positively related to self-esteem, and that emotionally intelligent people acquire affirmative responses from the society which help them function effectively at large. All these studies have implied that research including greater sample and from different cities/provinces of Pakistan must be included to get a holistic view on young adults of Pakistan. This can contribute to the existing body of knowledge and emotional maturity comprising on high levels of emotional intelligence can be fostered.

Aforementioned literature mentions numerous researches which have been conducted in different cultures presenting varied findings whereas a few researches have been reported from Pakistan as well. The presence of such diversified finding from across the globe specially from Pakistan, intrigued the researchers to investigate linkages between EI and the self-esteem of students in the student population and see how the dynamics between the two main variables of the study unfold in an academic environment among students of Karachi. It aspires to be a significant contribution to the aggregation of existing literature on emotional intelligence and self-esteem which so far proclaims miscellany in its findings.

Few researches claim that there is not any gender difference whereas others claim there is, most of the researchers found positive relationship between the two variables wherein few did not. Findings from Tajpreet (2015) endorsed relationship between the two. These findings along with other aforementioned ones (Bibi, Saqlain, & Mussawar, 2016; Country & Chester, 2005; Jennabadi, 2014) led to the formulation of the following hypotheses 'Emotional Intelligence and Self Esteem of students would represent a positive correlation', 'Emotional Intelligence of students would represent gender differences' and 'Self Esteem of students would represent gender differences'. It became imperative to investigate how these variables are related to one another and whether with changing times, there associations as reported in literature have altered or not.

## **METHODS**

### **Participants**

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Undergraduate university students (N=150) with age range 18-28 years (M=21.54; SD=2.63) were recruited through convenient sampling technique from different departments of University of Karachi, Pakistan.

### **Materials**

**Informed Consent:** It includes concise details about the objective of the study along with voluntary involvement without any financial or tangible gains. It also assured the privacy of participants and the reservation of rights to leave the study at any stage.

**Demographic form:** It includes personal information of participants related to age, gender, and marital status.

### **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)**

It assesses the holistic self-worth of individuals. 10-statements represent the holistic sense of self-acceptance or self-worth, scored with a Likert scale (4-strongly disagree-1-strongly agree). Internal consistency ranged from 0.77-0.88; temporal stability showed a range of 0.82-0.85. Construct validity of scale showed negative relationships with anxiety, anomie and depression (Rosenberg, 1965).

### **Schutte Self-Report EI Test (Schutte et al., 1998)**

It measures general (EI) sub-scales includes emotion perception, utilizing emotions, managing self-relevant emotions, and managing others' emotions (Schutte et al., 1998). 33-statements scored with 5- point Likert scale. It demonstrates adequate indices of reliability; validity scores with the big-five EI scale and Life satisfaction scale (Schutte et al., 1998; Petrides & Furnham, 2000).

### **Procedure**

Data was collected over one month (March, 2019-April, 2019). Participants were approached individually by the researchers and handed over study materials. Only consented participants were included in the study. Forms with missing responses were discarded. Data were simultaneously entered and scored using SPSS-23.

### **RESULTS**

Data Analysis included frequency, percentages, Pearson's correlation coefficients, and independent sample t-test using SPSS-23.

**Table 1 Demographic Information (N=150)**

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Demographics	Frequency(f)	%
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Gender	Men	75	50
	Women	75	50
Age	18-22	135	90
	23- 28	15	10
Marital Status	Single	137	91.3
	Engaged/relationship	12	
	Married	1	8
			0.6

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of participants.

**Table 2 Relationship between EI and Self-esteem (N=150)**

	M	SD	Correlation
Emotional Intelligence	116.08	16.35	
Self-esteem	27.30	3.6	.445**

Table 2 shows (M)mean, and (SD)standard deviations. The significant relationship between EI and Self-Esteem: $r(150) = .445, p < .01$ .

**Table 3 Gender Differences Between EI and Self-esteem scores**

	Female	Male	t	df	p-value
	M(SD)	M(SD)			
EI	118.746	113.426	-2.012	148	.04

	(13.698)	(18.359)			
Self-esteem	26.706	27.706	-2.015	148	.04
	(3.372)	(3.901)			

Table 3 shows that EI scores were significantly higher for female (M =118.74, SD =13.689), t (148) = -2.012, p < .005, as compared to males (M = 113.426, SD = 18.359), t (148) = -2.012, p< .005. Self-esteem scores were significantly higher for male (M = 26.706, SD = 3.372), t(148) = -2.015 ,p < .005 than female (M =27.706, SD = 3.901), t (148) = -2.015, p < .005.

## DISCUSSION

Outcomes of study establish positive linkage between EI and self-esteem of undergraduates shows congruency with previous results (Country & Chester, 2005; Bibi et al, 2016; Shamsaei et al, 2017; Yahya & Ahmed, 2006). Plausible reasons for present outcomes denote fact that EI enables adaptive coping mechanisms which provide support for academic achievements; and are positively associated with high self-esteem and greater academic improvements (Salovey, Stroud, Woolery, & Epel 2002; Chiva & Alerge, 2008). People with higher EI possess capabilities to mobilize available resources, accumulate novice details, obtains insights, and effusively maximize aptitudes (Ciarrochi, Forgas & Mayer, 2006).Pronounced EI and self-esteem are responsible for healthy personality traits, happiness, success; and overall improved wellbeing (Chamorro-Premuzic, Bennett, Furnham, 2007; Hollander,2002).

Results showed females possess higher EI than males, affirm earlier studies which elude that women tend to more emotionally expressive, better understand emotions, possess greater interpersonal skills to recognize other’s emotions, and demonstrate higher levels of empathy as compared to males (Aquino, 2003; Argyle, 1990; Hargie, Saunders & Dickson, 1995; Lafferty, 2004; Tapia & Marsh II, 2006).Interestingly, evidence exists for gender disparities in cerebral stimulations (Jausovec & Jausovec, 2005) and females possess larger areas in the brain responsible for emotion processing (Baron-Cohen, 2003) along with Apart from biological paradigms, cultural priming holds relevance for present result, societies demands men to discount emotions (grief, guilt, helplessness & anxiety)(Brody & Hall, 1999; Sánchez, Fernández- Berrocal, Montañés, & Latorre, 2008) whereas, females

possess greater emotional awareness, effortlessly show feelings (Brody & Hall, 2000; Ciarrochi, Hynes, & Crittenden, 2005; Hall & Mast, 2008).

Results also indicated that males possess higher self-esteem as compared to females agree with investigations that suggests that males showed higher self-esteem as compared to females (Zeinvand, 2006; Baumeister, 1993; Pipher, 1994, Harper & Marshall, 1991). In Pakistani society, masculine attributes are highly valued, perceived dominant beings. Men are expected to harbor confidence whereas for women exhibition of self-assurance conflicts with traditional gender values (Kling, Hyde, Showers, & Buswell, 1999).

### **CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS**

Outcomes provide valuable insights into the interrelatedness of EI and the self-esteem of students. It infers the necessity of emotional interventions to facilitate wellbeing and serves as a crucial aspect of educational curriculum to address emotional maturity among students (Tajpreet, 2015). Outcomes hold significance for academicians, teachers, and policymakers to introduce educational interventions and plans with an active focus towards gender differences on harboring EI and self-esteem of pupils to enhance academic performance. The insight on gender differences can assist them in tailoring specific interventional strategies for boys and girls separately.

Findings of this research can also be utilized by school counselors who directly deal with pupil, they can better understand how to enable boys and girls to identify their self-esteem issues and then contribute to the self-regulation of their emotions. This in turn will increase student's academic productivity and provide them intrapersonal tools to maneuver their academic growth. They can also be given insight on how falling behind on these skills can hinder their growth.

However, the sample size is rather small which might not truly represent all undergraduate students of Karachi, Pakistan. Outcomes could be generalized considering the larger student population recruited from different public and private universities all over the country. The study could be replicated using an indigenously developed tool in the native language in future studies. Moreover, other studies can do include other important psychodemographic variables which can provide better insight.

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