

## Emotional Intelligence and Self Esteem among Young Adults

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### ABSTRACT

It is a non-experimental quantitative study aimed to study the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among young adults. In the present study the researcher also made an attempt to explore the gender difference with regard to their emotional intelligence and self-esteem levels. The data was collected using the Schutte's emotional intelligence scale and Rosenberg's self-esteem scale from a sample of 177 young adults (N=177) that belong to working and student population, in which 88 were male participants and 89 were female participants (Female=89 and Male= 88). The sample was collected among 8 different states such as Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Kolkata. The study found that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among young adults, and the correlation was found to be positive. The study also found that there is no significant gender difference among young adults with regard to their emotional intelligence, whereas in case of self-esteem also, no significant gender difference was found.

**Keywords:** *Emotional Intelligence, Self-esteem, College Students, Working Population*

According to Erik Erikson's stages of human development young adulthood falls between the period of late teens to early thirties or early twenties. The young adulthood is followed by middle adulthood in human development. During young adulthood a lot of things change in an adult's life and this period of life comprises of new changes, responsibilities, adjustments to new patterns in life etc. ("Young Adult," 2021). The young adult is expected to play multiple roles such as that of spouse, parent and to develop keeping with these new roles (Berger & Bzostek, 2014). The life of an adult becomes difficult to some extent due to certain expectations from the family, friends, society, workplace and so on. Life becomes difficult at this stage because of lack of the support from parents, siblings, spouse or even friends which they used to get in their earlier stages of life and due to certain difficulties, some adults have low self-esteem especially when they aren't able to face their problems head on or make adjustments in their life. Not all adults can perfectly adapt to their new patterns in life and some continue to act immature too.

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Received: May 10, 2021; Revision Received: July 15, 2021; Accepted: August 03, 2021

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### *Emotional Intelligence*

One of the interesting topic to discuss in psychology is emotional intelligence and there are lots of studies done on the same. Emotional intelligence was introduced by Mayer and Salovey in 1990 and they say that emotional intelligence is an Individual's mental ability to reason with the emotions in order to enhance their thoughts and doing so while promoting intellectual and emotional growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1993). According to several researchers there exist lots of individual differences in emotional intelligence and those were focused on studying emotional abilities as predictors of health, social functioning and psychological well-being.

According to Schutte's emotional intelligence scale there are four subscales under it such as emotion perception, utilization of emotions, managing own emotions, and managing other's emotions (Kannaiah, 2015). The four subscales could be elaborated as follows,

**Emotion perception-** It refers to an individual's ability in identifying other's emotions, to which even the physiological and biological processes are involved.

**Utilization of emotions-** According to Mayer, it refers to our ability to use emotional understanding while making decisions, communicating with others, while solving problems or while managing our own emotions.

**Managing own emotions-** Recognizing one's emotions and managing the same is very important. It is requisite to control impulsive feelings, behaviours, thoughts and people that do this are known to be emotionally intelligent.

**Managing other's emotions-** The ability of an individual to be open to feelings, opinions and to regulate them in thyself as well on others in order to promote understanding with others.

### *Self Esteem*

Rosenberg (1965), one of the pioneers in the field of psychology stated that self-esteem refers to an individual's overall positive evaluation to the self. He said, a person that respects himself and considers himself worthy has high self-esteem. In a similar way Sedikides and Gress (2003) stated that self-esteem refers to an individual's perception or subjection appraisal of one's own self-worth, one's feelings of self-respect and self-confidence and the extent to which the individual holds positive or negative means about self. A thorough evaluation of oneself in both negative as well as positive way refers to self-esteem and basically it refers to the way in which people look at themselves, if a person considers himself or herself to be worthy or not and if he or she believes in themselves or not (R. F. Baumeister, 1999). Today a major factor in learning outcome is self-esteem. Self-esteem is a socio-psychological construct that assesses an Individual's attitudes and perception of self-worth. The assessment of the self-esteem of individual's could be done on the basis of two interrelated processes. First, is by comparing their abilities, opinions and social identities with others. An individual's self-esteem will be affected if he or she considers himself or herself to be inferior to others with whom they interact. Second, Individuals assess their self-esteem through their interaction with others. People learn to see themselves as others believe to be. (R. Baumeister et al., 2003)

### *Types of Self-esteem (Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005)*

Low Self-esteem is a hopeless condition that restricts individuals from realizing their full potential. A person that has low self-esteem, feels incompetent, unworthy, and incapable. In

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fact, people with low self-esteem feel so poorly about themselves, these feelings make the person remain with continuous low self-esteem. Low self-esteem is a trait of financially unsuccessful people which in turn results in low risky decision-making ability.

High Self-esteem- People who have high self-esteem generally feel good about their ability to participate, confident in social situations and happy with the way they are and they are confident and have good sense of self-worth, they are positive, encouraging and supportive to others and they possess good communication. They are participative, energetic, ambitious and they learn from their mistakes. These things give them strength and flexibility to take change of their lives and grow from mistakes without any fear (Cutler, N.E, 1993).

### OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study was done on the Pakistani University students in order to assess the relationship between self-esteem and emotional intelligence and it was conducted with a sample size (N=250) including both male and female genders. The sample was drawn from the universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad ( Pakistan ) (Bibi & Saqlain, 2016) . In this study the researcher used Rosenberg's self-esteem scale in order to measure the self-esteem among the Pakistani University students and for measuring emotional intelligence among the same population the researcher used emotional intelligence scale by Wong and Law. There were some objectives of this study. First, to find out the relationship between self-esteem and Emotional Intelligence among Pakistani university students and it was found out that both variables are highly positively correlated. Second, the researcher aimed to assess the gender differences in self-esteem and emotional intelligence among the Pakistani students. According to the results, it was stated that there does not exist any statistically significant gender difference in self-esteem among university students. The results also state that there exists significant gender difference between male and female participants for the variable emotional intelligence and the mean emotional intelligence was found to be higher in females which means that female participants are more emotionally intelligent than male participants.

Another study was conducted by researchers Maryam Meshkat and Reza Nejati, which was done to determine whether students from different genders are different in emotional intelligence and its related components in Iran (Maryam & Reza, 2017). The sample was drawn from Undergraduate university students from Iran. The results from this study indicated that there was no significant gender difference in emotional intelligence among the university students of Iran.

Another study on Relationship of Emotional intelligence with self-esteem among adolescents was done by the researcher Kaur Tajpreet and Maheshwari S K. The present study was done by conducting a survey among 200 randomly selected (Lottery method) students from six conveniently selected schools of district Faridkot (Punjab). For the present study the researcher used the emotional intelligence scale (Schutte et al., 1998) which is a 33-item scale and the other tool used was Rosenberg's self-esteem scale, which is a standardized 10 item Likert scale. The results showed that the emotional Intelligence and self-esteem had significant positive correlation at the 0.01 level. The results of the study also showed that there was no significant relationship between socio-demographic variables such as gender, type of family, class, income, educational status of mother and educational status of father with the self-esteem at the 0.05 level and similarly there was no significant relationship between socio-demographic variables such as gender, type of family, income,

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class, educational status of father and educational status of mother at the 0.05 level (Tajpreet & Maheshwari, 2015)

Another finding was done by PhD associate Professor Hossein Jenaabadi, University of Sistan & Baluchestan and it was about studying the relation between Emotional intelligence and self-esteem with academic achievement (Jenaabadi, 2014). This is a quantitative research and the statistical population of this study includes 2000 students of Kahnooj Payam-e Nour University and they are all MA degree students of batch 2010-2011. The population comprised of 150 male and female students and they were chosen randomly as group sample. The researcher used Pop's self-esteem questionnaire and Bar's Ann' emotional intelligence questionnaire for collecting data and he used SPSS to analyze data. It was found out that there was significant relationship between self-esteem and emotional intelligence, which means that both the variables were found to be highly positively correlated.

Another research was done by the researchers Chau-Kiu Chung, Hoi Yan Chung, & Ming-Tak Hue (2014)(Cheung et al., 2015). The present research included 405 undergraduates in Hong Kong, China. From the population there were 55.1% male participants and 44.9% of female participants from different majors. For the present study the researcher used four scales for the given four variables. The Emotional intelligence scale included 16 self-assessed items, which measures four components such as appraisal of self-emotion, appraisal of others emotions, use of emotions and regulation of emotions (Law et al. 2004). The self-esteem scale included 10 items and they were of five positive statements and five negative statements (Rosenberg, 1965). Social efficacy was a scale of six items (Sherer & Madelux, 1982). The academic achievement was a single self-reported item regarding grade point average. According to the result, the simple averages (Not based on structural equation modelling) showed that all the variables emotional intelligence, self-esteem, social efficacy were at modest levels. The results also showed that emotional intelligence had a strong positive effect on self-esteem, it mediates the positive effect of GPA on self-esteem and also explained the positive effect of social efficacy on self-esteem. In this research age showed a positive effect on self-esteem and it was also found out that female candidates have higher self-esteem than male candidates.

Another research was done by some researchers on the Relationship between Self-esteem, emotional intelligence and empathy among students from six health professional programs (Sa et al., 2019). In the present study the researchers wanted to explore the self-esteem among the students during their first year of training. The researchers collected data by conducting cross sectional survey and data was collected from medical, dental, nursing, pharmacy, optometry and veterinary students. Results of this study revealed few things such as the mean self-esteem score, according to which it was interpreted that 21.1% of the sample evidenced low self-esteem, gender did not have a significant effect on self-esteem scores but the ethnicity did, emotional intelligence and empathy showed a small association with self-esteem, emotional intelligence scores were higher for male than female participants. The researcher also concluded that during the first year of the students, many suffered due to low self-esteem and they said such students might be more prone to stress, development of psychopathology also might occur.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The researcher had raised the following research questions which have been answered in the present study.

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### Research Questions

- Is there a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among young adults?
- Is there a significant gender difference in emotional intelligence among young adults?
- Is there a significant gender difference in self-esteem among young adults?
- In order to answer the above research questions, the following objectives had been developed and achieved in the present study.

### Objectives

- To assess the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among young adults.
- To assess the significant gender difference in emotional intelligence among young adults
- To assess the significant gender difference in self-esteem among young adults.
- In order to achieve the above objectives, the following hypotheses had been generated and tested in this study.

### Hypotheses

**H1:** There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among young adults

**H2:** There is a significant gender difference among young adults with regard to their emotional intelligence.

**H3:** There is a significant gender difference among young adults with regard to their self esteem

### Design of the Study

A non-experimental quantitative research design was employed in the present study to assess the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem and to find out the gender difference.

### Sample

The sample of the study comprised 177(N=177) young adults of age group 18-35 years, of which there were 88 male and 89 female (Female =89, Male=88) participants from both working and student population from the states Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Kolkata in India. Non probability purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample.

### Tools used

Variables	Tool	Developer	Likert Type	Validity/ Reliability
Emotional Intelligence	Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIA)	Schutte et al (1998)	5-point scale	Internal consistency ( $\alpha$ ) - 0.90
Self Esteem	Rosenberg's Self esteem scale (SES)	Dr M Rosenberg (1965)	4-point scale	Cronbach's coefficient- 0.90

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The data collected were scored, tabulated and also their descriptive statistics were calculated. In turn, the outcomes or results were interpreted hypothesis wise with the help of inferential statistics. The obtained results are discussed as follows.

**H1: There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among young adults.**

In order to test the above hypothesis, the mean scores obtained by the young adults on emotional intelligence and self-esteem was computed apart from the computation of SD. Further, the significance of the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem was computed using Pearson correlation test which yielded the following.

*Table 1 Correlation between emotional intelligence and self esteem among young adults.*

	N	M	SD	R	p
EI	177	125.40	11.54	.485**	0.01
SE		18.97	4.22		

Note: EI= Emotional Intelligence, SE= Self Esteem, N= Total Sample, r=Pearson Correlation Coefficient

An analysis of the above table indicates that there were 177 young adults. The mean score of the participants for emotional intelligence was found to be 125.40, while that for self-esteem was 18.97. While in terms of standard deviation, the emotional intelligence had 11.54 and self-esteem had 4.22. In order to see whether there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among young adults, the scores were subjected to Pearson correlation test, which yielded the pearson correlation coefficient ‘r’ as .485\*\* which is statistically significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted which states that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among young adults. In this study a significant positive correlation was also found among emotional intelligence and self-esteem. These results are consistent with previous study conducted on students of the universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad ( Pakistan ) which showed a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem and this study also showed that there is positive correlation between emotional intelligence and self-esteem (Bibi & Saqlain, 2016)

**H2: There is a significant gender difference in emotional intelligence among young adults.**

In order to test the above hypothesis, the significance of the difference between mean scores of the two groups (Male and female) was computed using “t” test which yielded the following.

*Table 2 Independent Sample t test for the gender difference in Emotional intelligence among young adults.*

	N	M	SD	SE	df	t	P
Male	88	124.63	12.26	1.307	175	.882	.379
Female	89	126.16	10.799	1.144			

Note: df= Degree of Freedom, \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01

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An analysis of the above table indicates the mean score of the male participants on emotional intelligence and it which was found to be 124.63, while for female participants was 126.16. Both the groups have high level of emotional intelligence, apparently, the female participants have a higher level of emotional intelligence when compared to male participants. While in terms of standard deviation, the male participants had 12.26 and female participants had 10.799. It means the spread of scores away from the mean was apparently more for male participants suggesting that the variation was more for male rather than female participants. In order to test the obtained significant mean difference, independent sample t test was done and it was found to be .882, which was statistically not significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. It means that there is no significant gender difference in emotional intelligence among young adults and this finding is consistent with previous study in which it was found that there is no significant gender difference in emotional intelligence among the university students of Iran (Meshkat, 2017)

### **H3: There is a significant gender difference in self-esteem among young adults.**

In order to test the above hypothesis, the significance of the difference between mean scores of the two groups was computed using “t” test which yielded the following.

**Table 3 Independent Sample t test for the gender difference in self-esteem among young adults.**

	N	M	SD	SE	df	t	p
Male	88	19.227	4.593	.4896	238	175	.425
Female	89	18.719	3.8346	.4064			

*Note:* df= Degree of Freedom

An analysis of the above table indicates the mean score of the male participant on self-esteem, and it was found to be 19.227 and that of female participants was found to be 18.719. There was a marginal apparent difference of mean scores in favor of male participants which indicates that they had a higher self-esteem than female participants. In terms of standard deviation, the male participants scored 4.593 and females scored 3.8346 suggesting that the scores of male participants were spread more away from the mean scores than that of the female participants. In order to test the obtained significant mean difference, the scores were subjected to independent sample t test and it was found to be 175, which was not significant at both the levels. So, the hypothesis is rejected. It means that there is no significant gender difference in self-esteem among young adults and this finding is consistent with the previous study which showed that there is no significant gender difference in self esteem among young adults (Sa et al., 2019).

## **CONCLUSION**

- There was significant relationship between the emotional intelligence and self-esteem among the young adults and this correlation was found to be positive.
- There is no significant gender difference in emotional intelligence among young adults.
- There is no significant gender difference in self-esteem among young adults.

### **Limitations**

This study has the following limitations:

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- In this study the young adults of age group 18-35 are only considered; thus, the findings may not be applicable to individuals of other age groups.
- This study covers only the students and working young adults in Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Kolkata as a sample and hence the results may not hold good for the other parts or segments of the population.
- This study was based on a self-report questionnaire, so there might be response bias which cannot be ignored.
- The sample is drawn from India; thus, the findings may not be true for the individuals out of India.
- This study was based on a correlational research design, so no conclusion can be drawn about the causal relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem.

### *Implications*

Although the total mean scores of emotional intelligences for both male and female participants is high, the participants must make sure they develop skills in order to maintain a good emotional intelligence level. Improvements in lifestyle could be done. Also, there is a need for the population to participate in social discussions in order to develop their ability to understand other's opinions, feelings and communication patterns. Further, the parents and family members may also play an essential role in maintaining a good emotional intelligence level and in order to have a good self-esteem about oneself one must feel that they are worthy so it is important for the individuals to participate in outdoor activities, to explore more about themselves and to hone their skills and develop good communication skills as well.

### *Suggestions for future research*

Whereas some contribution to the existing literature has been made by this study, these findings are only limited to a particular age group and to the young adults belonging from Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Kolkata. Further research is needed on other samples from other states and countries as well. Studies should also be conducted among other age groups, beyond the age group of 18-35 years to further determine whether there is support for the findings of this research or not. In future studies, other measurements can be used to determine the different aspects of emotional intelligence and self-esteem levels, as well as other socio-demographic variables can be compared to determine the significant difference in the emotional intelligence and self-esteem levels. A mixed approach of qualitative and quantitative methods can be used which will help to explore more possibilities in the study.

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### **Acknowledgement**

The author appreciates and thanks everyone who participated in this study and helped to simplify the research process.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

**How to cite this article:** Selvan M.& Vijayan D. (2021). Emotional Intelligence and Self Esteem among Young Adults. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 9(3), 286-294. DIP:18.01.031.20210903, DOI:10.25215/0903.031