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Research Paper

Assessment of Emotional Intelligence and Prosocial Behavior in Youth

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the emotional intelligence (EI) and prosocial behavior (PSB) in youth. The tools that were employed for the data collection were Helping Attitude Scale (HAS) by Gary S. Nickell (1998), Assessing Emotions Scale (AES) by Nicola Schutte (2009). A total of 100 college students aged from 18 to 25 both through physical method (60%), and through google forms (40%) completed a survey measuring the Emotional Intelligence Scale and Prosocial Tendencies. It was taken care of that 50% of the population was male and the rest 50% was female population to control any extraneous variable that may result when only one gender is investigated. The results showed that there is not much difference between the emotional intelligence of young adult males and females in either of the dimensions of EI, except for in the dimension of managing one's own emotions, where females scored higher than males. Other than that, a significant difference can be seen in males and females where prosocial behavior is concerned. Females (M=71.26, SD=5.59) are seen to be more prosocial than males (M=69.70, SD=7.42). Out of the four dimensions of emotional intelligence, only managing one's own emotions (t= 0.407) shows a significant association between the two variables. The rest of the dimensions don't show any noticeable association of any kind (positive or negative) with prosocial behaviour. Therefore, our results suggested that under the influence of both internal and external factors, there is an indirect effect of EI on PSB. This finding may potentially provide a theoretical basis for designing college students' mental health courses and cultivating PSB in college.

Keywords: *Emotion, Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence, Prosocial Behavior*

Emotional intelligence, or EI is the "ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Salovey and Mayer, 1989; Afolabi 2004). It involves being aware that emotions drive behaviors and impact people either positively or negatively. It helps you to identify and understand human emotions. Individuals high on emotional intelligence defer immediate gratification and exhibit self-control to optimize pleasure over their lifetime. Also, they display enlightened self-interest by engaging in activities that are both pro-individual and pro-social (Goleman, 1995). Findings suggest that lower emotional intelligence is related to involvement in self-destructive behaviors such as deviant behavior and cigarette smoking (Brackett & Mayer, 2003; Brackett, Mayer, & Warner, 2004),

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whereas higher emotional intelligence is related to positive outcomes that can help you build relationships in the workplace, accomplish tasks, and achieve goals.

Emotions can lead you to act without thinking. Having emotional intelligence can help you avoid those situations when you might act on impulse rather than fact. Understanding and managing your emotions and those of others can help you be more successful in your personal and professional life. Emotional intelligence can play a large role when we are having difficult conversations without hurting others' feelings, managing our emotions when feeling stressed or overwhelmed, improving relationships with others, resolving conflict, coaching and motivating others, creating a collaborative environment etc. Emotional intelligence is a dynamic skill that can be developed and refined over time. As managers, understanding these dimensions allows us to create a more emotionally intelligent workplace, leading to better results both personally and professionally.

Thus, based on the literature reviewed, the following hypotheses were tested:

- There will be a significant difference in emotional intelligence among young adult males and females.
- There will be a significant difference in prosocial behavior among young adult males and females.

METHODS

Participants/sample

The sample selected, in total for the study, was 100. It was taken care of that 50% of the population was male and the rest 50% was female population to control any extraneous variable that may result when only one gender is investigated. The selection of the sample was done through non-probability sampling, purposive type. The age group chosen for the study was 18-25 years of age, i.e. individuals who fall in the category of 'young adults.' The data was collected both through physical method (60%), and through google forms (40%). No other demographic variations except age and gender were considered. The educational qualification preferred was degree level. Inclusion criteria of the study consisted of individuals falling in the category of young adults/youth, whereas the exclusion criteria consisted of individuals falling in either of the categories: children, teenagers, older adults, people with disability and those with clinical illnesses.

Measures

Emotional Intelligence

EI was assessed by the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), developed by Nicola Schutte et al. (2009) and is also commonly known as the Schutte Self-report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSREIT). It is based on the famously and widely employed Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) and the model of emotional intelligence developed by John D. Mayer, Peter Salovey and David R. Caruso in 1990. The test-retest reliability of this scale was 0.75 whereas the Cronbach's alpha was 0.90. This scale measures emotional intelligence through four dimensions: perception of emotion, managing one's own emotions, managing others' emotions and utilization of emotions. Among these four dimensions, the 33 items of the test are distributed and measured according to the five-point Likert scale (from strongly agree to strongly disagree). The scale consists of 3 negative items which are reverse scored and then added up with the normally scored results to arrive at the final score. The scores ranged from 33-165. Those who scored higher and above 105 were high in emotional intelligence whereas those who scored low and below 105 were low in emotional intelligence.

Prosocial behavior

Helping Attitude Scale (HAS), measuring prosocial behavior, was developed by Gary S. Nickell, a professor of psychology at the Minnesota State University, Moorhead, Minnesota in the year 1998. The latest edition of this scale HAS Form 20 was used for this study. The test-retest reliability of the scale was found to be 0.85 and the Cronbach's alpha was 0.86. The scale consists of 20 statements, and these statements have to be rated on a scale of 1 to 5 (1- strongly disagree, 2 - disagree, 3- undecided, 4 - agree and 5 - strongly agree). The scale had certain negative items too, which were to be scored reversely, i.e., where strongly agree is rated 1 and strongly disagree is rated 5. The neutral score was 60. Individuals who scored higher were considered to be high in prosocial behavior and the ones who scored less than the neutral score were considered to be low in prosocial behavior.

Procedure

To collect the sample, girls from the university hostel were approached one by one. A rapport was established with the participants. They were ensured that their identities and the responses that they gave to the questionnaires would be kept strictly confidential, and not revealed anywhere. They were also given the confidence that their responses will not be individually read or judged in any way, and these responses will be used only for research purposes. They were told that the participation in the study was totally voluntary, and they can opt out of it, whenever they feel uncomfortable. They were asked for their written as well oral consent.

After the rapport was established, all the three questionnaires were printed and attached together and distributed to the girls residing in the hostel. Along with the instructions printed with the scales, the participants were also given oral instructions and made to understand what they were required to do and how to respond to each statement. They were told that it was not a test, therefore there was no right and wrong answer and that they need not worry about the results. They were also told to not consult each other. They were asked to give honest answers and not skip any statement. The participants were given around 10-15 minutes to complete approximate 100 questions of 3 questionnaires. After the participants completed the questionnaires, the response sheets were collected back from them.

As for the male participants, the majority of the sample was collected via google forms. A google form was created wherein all the questions from the three questionnaires were entered and circulated among males. For them, an introductory page was made, where all the information regarding the voluntary participation was given, and along with this a few statements of consent were also written and made compulsory to answer. Those who chose 'Yes' would be directed towards the questionnaires and those who chose 'No' for the consent, were redirected towards submission of the form.

After this, all the participants were conveyed gratitude for taking out time and participating in the study. Using proper statistical tools, the raw data of the 100 participants was first reverse scored and then calculated as per the hypotheses. The details and the result tales for the study are given in the next chapter.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis of the data obtained from the population was done through SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) software, most commonly used for statistics in the social sciences field. According to the hypotheses, it was seen that the research topic was based on comparing the differences between genders. Therefore, the software was used to

find out independent t-test scores and determine how these affected variables on 0.5 and 0.1 levels of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Significant difference among males and females in emotional intelligence and prosocial behavior (t test).

	GENDER	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Correlation with PSB
EI perception of emotion	Male	35.180	5.3669	1.345	0.114
	Female	36.620	5.3409		
EI managing own emotions	Male	34.360	6.1404	0.407*	0.045
	Female	34.800	4.5400		
EI managing other's emotions	Male	31.080	4.4714	1.605	0.148
	Female	32.500	4.3764		
EI utilization of emotions	Male	23.760	3.2984	3.007	0.241*
	Female	25.600	2.7994		
EI	Male	124.820	13.3228	1.491	0.159
	Female	129.080	15.1816		
PSB	Male	69.700	7.4292	1.186*	1.0
	Female	71.260	5.5908		

**Correlation is significant at P<0.05*

It can be seen from the table that there is not much difference between the emotional intelligence of young adult males and females in either of the dimensions of EI, except for in the dimension of managing one's own emotions, where females scored higher (M=34.36, SD=6.14) than males (M=34.80, SD=4.54). Other than that, a significant difference can be seen in males and females where prosocial behavior is concerned. Females (M=71.26, SD=5.59) are seen to be more prosocial than males (M=69.70, SD=7.42). Out of the four dimensions of emotional intelligence, only managing one's own emotions (t= 0.407) shows a significant association between the two variables. The rest of the dimensions don't show any noticeable association of any kind (positive or negative) with prosocial behaviour.

The hypothesis derived was that there would be significant difference in emotional intelligence among young adult males and females. As it can be seen in Table, we learn that within males and females there is no overall difference in emotional intelligence dimensions, except for in managing own emotions where there is a significant difference between males (M= 34.80, SD=4.54) and females (M=34.36, SD=6.14). The t value obtained is 0.407 which is significant at p=0.05 level. This suggests that women may have an advantage in self-awareness and self-regulation, which can positively impact their leadership and interpersonal effectiveness. Since there is one dimension of EI which shows significant difference between the two, it can be said that this hypothesis will be partially accepted. Daniel Goleman (2011) states, "Women tend to be better at emotional empathy than men, in general. This kind of empathy fosters rapport and chemistry. If the other person is upset, or the emotions are disturbing, women's brains tend to stay with those feelings. But men's brains do something else: they sense the feelings for a moment, then tune out of the emotions and switch to other brain areas that try to solve the problem that's creating the disturbance." Study by Meshkat & Nejati (2017) showed that there was no significant difference between the genders on their total score measuring emotional intelligence, but the genders did tend to differ in emotional self-awareness, interpersonal relationship, self-regard, and empathy with females scoring higher than males. Data from research by Korn

Ferry (2016), a global organizational consulting firm, found that women were 86% more likely than men to be seen as consistently demonstrating emotional self-awareness as a competency (18.4% of women compared to just 9.9% of men). Women were 45% more likely than men for demonstrating empathy consistently. Emotional self-control is the only competency in which men and women showed equal performance.

In the hypothesis second, it was hypothesized that there will be a significant difference between emotional intelligence and prosocial behavior among young adult males and females. When we refer to Table 1 which consists of the t-test values of males and females, we can see that there is a clear difference between the means and standard deviations of young adult males (M=69.70, SD=7.429) and females (M=71.26, SD=5.59) with respect to their prosocial tendencies and behaviours. The t value obtained was 1.186 which is significant at p=0.05 level. This shows that there is a substantial variation between the two sexes, and that women are more caring, compassionate, empathetic and ready to help others in need as compared to men. Hence it can be said that the hypothesis has been accepted and that there is a significant difference in prosocial behavior among young adult males and females. Literature to support this hypothesis is given by (Rushton, 1982) wherein it is said that the influence of gender on altruistic behavior has been considered, studies concluding that – in general terms – women are more inclined to help and to do it quickly, and the principle of social responsibility being more salient in women than in men (Smithson, Amato, & Pearle, 1983). This is because "based on gender roles, females generally are expected and believed to be more responsive, empathetic and prosocial than males whereas males are expected to be relatively independent and achievement oriented" (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006; Seefeldt, 2008).

Pursell et al. (2008) also concluded that girls tend to score higher than boys on indices of PSB and externalizing problems. These differences could be due to the differences in socialization of men and women because, women are socialized to have concern for others and to take care of one another, while men are socialized to be in competition with each other.

CONCLUSION

Females scored higher in this dimension compared to males. This suggests that women may excel in self-awareness and self-regulation. Being attuned to their emotions and effectively managing them can positively impact their decision-making and interpersonal interactions. Females exhibit more prosocial behavior than males. Prosocial behavior refers to actions that benefit others, such as kindness, empathy, and cooperation. This finding aligns with broader research indicating that women tend to be more empathetic, nurturing, and community oriented. Their prosocial tendencies contribute to building supportive relationships and fostering collaboration.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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