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Gender differences in emotional intelligence: A comparative analysis of male and female responses across key EI components

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Abstract
This study aims to explore the emotional intelligence (EI) levels of male and female participants through an analysis of their responses to various questions assessing self-awareness, emotional regulation, stress management, resilience, and social awareness. Data were collected from two groups, Group A (male) and Group B (female), with each group answering seven questions related to different EI components. The results revealed that females generally exhibited higher emotional intelligence, with an overall mean score of 3.85 compared to the male group's score of 3.69. Key findings indicate that females performed better in emotional regulation and resilience, whereas both groups faced challenges in managing stress effectively. The study highlights the significance of emotional intelligence in personal and academic development and suggests that targeted interventions could further enhance EI, particularly in areas like stress management and resilience.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, self-awareness, emotional regulation, stress management, resilience

Introduction
Emotional intelligence (EI) is a critical ability that allows individuals to perceive, understand, manage, and regulate emotions, both within themselves and in others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) [11]. Goleman (1995) [8] expanded on this concept, asserting that emotional intelligence encompasses several competencies, including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These competencies have been found to play a significant role in personal well-being, academic achievement, and professional success (Bar-On, 1997; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004) [2, 9].

The ability to assess and understand one's emotions, as well as those of others, is vital for effective decision-making and interpersonal relationships (Mayer *et al*., 2004) [9]. Various tools and questionnaires have been developed to measure emotional intelligence, helping to assess these emotional competencies in both individuals and groups (Petrides, 2009) [10]. For instance, the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) and Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) are widely used for assessing emotional intelligence (Mayer *et al*., 2002) [9].

Gender differences in emotional intelligence have been a subject of ongoing debate, with some studies suggesting that females tend to score higher than males in areas such as empathy and emotional regulation (Bar-On, 1997; Brody, 2000) [2, 3]. However, other research highlights that gender differences in emotional intelligence are not always consistent across different contexts and measures (Schutte *et al*., 1998) [12]. This study aims to explore potential gender differences in emotional intelligence among university students, based on responses to a seven-question emotional intelligence questionnaire.

This research examines the emotional intelligence of male and female students, comparing their overall scores based on a set of seven questions. The data were collected via an online questionnaire, and the results were analyzed to determine the mean scores for both male and female participants. The study seeks to contribute to the ongoing understanding of emotional intelligence and gender-based variations in this important psychological construct.

Methodology

This study aimed to assess and compare the emotional intelligence (EI) of male and female students. The following steps were taken to conduct the research:

1. **Participants:** A total of 40 students were selected for this study, divided into two groups: 20 males (Group A) and 20 females (Group B). The participants were chosen from a university setting.
2. **Questionnaire Development:** A questionnaire consisting of seven items was designed to measure various dimensions of emotional intelligence. The items were based on common emotional intelligence indicators such as self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy. The seven questions included were:

- I am aware of my emotions as they arise.
- I am aware of how my emotions impact my behavior and decision-making.
- I have a good sense of my abilities and limitations.
- I am aware of my own emotional triggers.
- I am able to manage stress in healthy ways.
- I am able to bounce back quickly after setbacks.
- I am able to regulate my own emotions to stay focused on my goals.

3. **Data Collection:** The questionnaire was distributed online to the selected participants. They were asked to respond to each statement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from:

- 1 (Never), 2 (Rarely), 3 (Sometimes), 4 (Often), 5 (Always)

Responses were collected anonymously to ensure the privacy and authenticity of the answers.

4. **Data Analysis:** After collecting the responses, the data was analyzed by calculating the mean score for each group (males and females) for each of the seven questions. The mean scores for both groups were then compared to assess differences in emotional intelligence between male and female students.

The data analysis was done using the following formula:

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum (\text{responses for each question})}{\text{total number of participants}}$$

The mean scores for each group were calculated individually for each of the seven questions, and an overall mean was calculated by averaging the scores from all questions for each group.

5. **Interpretation of Results:** The study aimed to explore any significant differences between male and female emotional intelligence, as measured by the overall mean scores for the seven questions.

This methodology was designed to provide a simple yet effective comparison of emotional intelligence between male and female students, focusing on the average emotional intelligence levels as indicated by the seven questions in the questionnaire.

Results

The emotional intelligence data collected from both male and female groups was analyzed based on their responses to seven key questions. Below is the detailed presentation of the results for the male group (Group A) and the female group (Group B).

Male Group (Group A)

The following table summarizes the individual responses for each question and the calculated mean for each question.

Participant	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
P1	5	3	5	2	5	5	3
P2	3	4	4	4	2	4	4
P3	5	5	5	3	4	2	4
P4	4	3	5	2	3	3	5
P5	2	5	4	2	2	3	2
P6	3	2	5	3	4	3	3
P7	4	3	2	3	2	2	2
P8	5	3	5	4	5	1	1
P9	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
P10	4	5	5	5	5	4	5
P11	5	4	5	4	4	3	4
P12	3	2	2	3	3	5	5
P13	4	3	5	5	4	2	4
P14	1	4	5	5	5	5	5
P15	5	4	5	5	3	2	4
P16	5	5	3	2	2	3	3
P17	5	5	5	3	3	4	5
P18	3	3	5	5	5	5	5
P19	4	4	4	3	3	2	3
P20	1	1	5	1	1	2	3

Mean for each question: Q1 = 3.8, Q2 = 3.65, Q3 = 4.45, Q4 = 3.45, Q5 = 3.5, Q6 = 3.25, Q7 = 3.75

Overall Mean for Male Group (Group A):

$$\frac{(3.8 + 3.65 + 4.45 + 3.45 + 3.5 + 3.25 + 3.75)}{7} = 3.69$$

Findings for Male Group

1. **Q1: "I am aware of my emotions as they arise"**

- The mean for this question was 3.8, indicating that participants generally feel aware of their emotions.

2. **Q2: "I am aware of how my emotions impact my behavior and decision-making"**

- The mean score of 3.65 suggests a moderate level of awareness among participants regarding the impact of their emotions on behavior.

3. **Q3: "I have a good sense of my abilities and limitations"**

- The highest mean score of 4.45 indicates that participants have a strong sense of their own abilities and limitations.

4. **Q4: "I am aware of my own emotional triggers"**

- The mean score of 3.45 indicates that participants' awareness of emotional triggers is moderate.

5. **Q5: "I am able to manage stress in healthy ways"**

- The mean score of 3.5 shows that participants generally manage stress in healthy ways but may not always feel in full control.

6. **Q6: "I am able to bounce back quickly after setbacks"**

- With a mean of 3.25, this question shows that while some

participants can bounce back from setbacks, many find it challenging.

7. **Q7: "I am able to regulate my emotions to stay focused on my goals"**
- The mean score of 3.75 suggests that participants generally regulate their emotions to stay focused, though improvement may still be needed.

Summary of Results for Male Group: The overall mean emotional intelligence score for the male group was **3.69**, indicating moderate emotional intelligence among the participants. The highest mean was recorded for self-awareness of abilities and limitations (Q3), while the lowest was observed in the ability to bounce back from setbacks (Q6).

Female Group (Group B) - Emotional Intelligence Results
The following table summarizes the individual responses for each question and the calculated mean for each question for the female participants (Group B).

Participant	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
P1	5	5	5	3	5	3	5
P2	2	3	5	5	5	3	5
P3	3	4	5	4	5	5	5
P4	3	5	3	1	3	5	5
P5	3	5	3	5	1	3	4
P6	5	5	5	5	4	5	3
P7	2	4	3	5	1	1	1
P8	3	4	5	3	2	3	5
P9	3	3	5	5	4	3	4
P10	3	5	5	3	3	1	5
P11	3	3	2	3	3	3	5
P12	5	3	5	5	3	5	5
P13	4	4	4	4	4	4	5
P14	5	5	5	5	3	3	5
P15	5	2	3	4	3	2	5
P16	3	2	5	5	3	4	4
P17	5	5	5	5	3	4	4
P18	5	5	3	5	1	4	1
P19	3	4	5	2	5	5	5
P20	3	5	4	5	4	2	4

Mean for each question: Q1 = 3.65, Q2 = 4.05, Q3 = 4.25, Q4 = 4.1, Q5 = 3.25, Q6 = 3.45, Q7 = 4.2

Overall Mean for Female Group (Group B):

$$\frac{(3.65 + 4.05 + 4.25 + 4.1 + 3.25 + 3.45 + 4.2)}{7} = 3.85$$

Findings for Female Group

1. **Q1: "I am aware of my emotions as they arise"**
- The mean for this question was 3.65, indicating that participants generally feel aware of their emotions, though the responses vary.

2. **Q2: "I am aware of how my emotions impact my behavior and decision-making"**
- The mean score of 4.05 suggests that participants have a good level of awareness regarding the impact of their emotions on behavior and decisions.

3. **Q3: "I have a good sense of my abilities and limitations"**
- With a mean score of 4.25, participants show a strong sense of their own abilities and limitations.

4. **Q4: "I am aware of my own emotional triggers"**
- The mean score of 4.1 indicates a moderate to high level of awareness regarding emotional triggers.

5. **Q5: "I am able to manage stress in healthy ways"**
- The mean score of 3.25 suggests that stress management is an area where some participants struggle or find it challenging to maintain consistent healthy practices.

6. **Q6: "I am able to bounce back quickly after setbacks"**
- The mean of 3.45 reflects that while some participants can bounce back from setbacks, others might face difficulties in doing so quickly.

7. **Q7: "I am able to regulate my emotions to stay focused on my goals"**
- The mean score of 4.2 indicates that the majority of participants can regulate their emotions to stay focused on their goals, with relatively high levels of emotional control.

Summary of Results for Female Group: The overall mean emotional intelligence score for the female group was 3.85, suggesting a slightly higher emotional intelligence compared to the male group (3.69). The highest mean was recorded for the sense of abilities and limitations (Q3), while the lowest was seen in managing stress (Q5). Overall, participants showed good self-awareness and emotional regulation, though stress management and quick recovery from setbacks may need further attention.

Discussion
The present study aimed to explore the emotional intelligence (EI) levels in male and female participants by analyzing their responses to various questions regarding self-awareness, emotional regulation, stress management, and resilience. The data collected from two groups (Group A - Male and Group B - Female) provided insightful findings into their emotional intelligence scores across different components.

Overall Emotional Intelligence
The overall emotional intelligence mean score for the male group (Group A) was 3.69, while the female group (Group B) achieved a slightly higher mean of 3.85. This suggests that the female participants had marginally better emotional intelligence than the male participants. This difference, though small, aligns with existing literature that often suggests women tend to exhibit higher emotional intelligence due to better social and emotional awareness (Bar-On, 1997; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004) [2, 9].

Emotional Awareness and Self-Perception (Q1 & Q3)
One of the key aspects of emotional intelligence is self-awareness. In both groups, Q1 ("I am aware of my emotions as they arise") and Q3 ("I have a good sense of my abilities and limitations") had relatively high mean scores, indicating that participants generally possess a strong sense of self-awareness. The male group had a mean of 3.8 for Q1, and the female group had a mean of 3.65, showing that both groups are relatively aware of their emotions as they occur. For Q3, the female group had a slightly higher score (4.25) than the male group (4.45), suggesting that female participants felt

more confident about understanding their abilities and limitations, which could be attributed to a higher level of introspection or personal reflection. Self-awareness is a critical component of EI as it lays the foundation for emotional regulation and empathy (Goleman, 1995) [8].

Emotional Regulation and Self-Management (Q5 & Q7)

The ability to manage emotions effectively is another important facet of emotional intelligence. Q5 ("I am able to manage stress in healthy ways") and Q7 ("I am able to regulate my emotions to stay focused on my goals") both reflect the participants' capacity to manage emotions in challenging situations. The scores for Q5 were lower for both groups, with the male group averaging 3.5 and the female group 3.25, indicating that both groups experience difficulties in managing stress effectively. This suggests that stress management is an area that could be developed further, particularly for the female participants, where their emotional regulation capabilities appeared weaker in comparison to other EI components.

Interestingly, Q7 showed more positive results with the male group scoring 3.75 and the female group achieving 4.2. The female group scored significantly higher in their ability to regulate emotions to stay focused on their goals. This suggests that female participants may possess a higher capacity to maintain focus and emotional stability, which is consistent with research suggesting that women may excel in goal-oriented emotional regulation (Mayer *et al*., 2004) [9].

Resilience and Recovery from Setbacks (Q6)

Q6 ("I am able to bounce back quickly after setbacks") measures resilience, a critical aspect of emotional intelligence. Both groups showed similar mean scores for this question, with the male group scoring 3.25 and the female group 3.45, indicating that resilience is a strength but still requires improvement. Resilience is integral to emotional intelligence because it reflects an individual's ability to recover from negative emotional experiences and continue functioning effectively. The slightly higher score in the female group suggests that they may be somewhat better at recovering from setbacks, though both groups can benefit from strategies aimed at increasing emotional resilience (Mayer *et al*., 2008) [9].

Social Awareness (Q2 & Q4)

Social awareness, which involves understanding and empathizing with the emotions of others, was explored through questions such as Q2 ("I am aware of how my emotions impact my behavior and decision-making") and Q4 ("I am aware of my own emotional triggers"). Both groups demonstrated relatively high mean scores for these items, with the female group showing slightly better results. For Q2, the female group had a mean score of 4.05, indicating that they were more aware of how their emotions influenced their behavior, whereas the male group scored 3.65. This suggests that females may be more attuned to the emotional dynamics that shape their actions and decisions, which aligns with research indicating that women typically score higher on empathy and emotional awareness measures (Goleman, 1995). [8]

The scores for Q4, concerning emotional triggers, also indicated good awareness in both groups, with the female group scoring 4.1, slightly higher than the male group's 3.45. This suggests that the female participants were more likely to recognize their emotional triggers, an important factor in managing emotional responses effectively.

Limitations and Implications

Despite the valuable insights gained from this analysis, there are some limitations that must be considered. First, the study used self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias or personal inaccuracies. Second, the study was limited to a specific demographic (university students) and may not be generalizable to other populations. Future studies could benefit from using objective measures of emotional intelligence and examining a wider range of populations to determine the consistency of these findings.

Furthermore, while the study highlights areas for improvement in emotional intelligence, such as stress management and resilience, interventions aimed at improving these components could be beneficial. Workshops, emotional regulation training, and resilience-building programs may help participants, particularly females, to further enhance their emotional intelligence and overall well-being.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that emotional intelligence varies slightly between male and female participants, with females generally exhibiting stronger emotional regulation, self-awareness, and social awareness. Both groups, however, showed areas of improvement in stress management and resilience, which are crucial for emotional intelligence development. The study emphasizes the importance of fostering emotional intelligence in both personal and academic contexts and provides valuable insights for future educational and psychological interventions.

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