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A study of impact of gender on EQ and family environment

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Abstract

Emotions are our responses to the world around us and they are created by the combination of our thoughts, feelings and actions. There is growing awareness about two facts. Firstly, individuals with high EQ are more socially adept, display better social skills and are able to build long term, satisfying relationships as compared to those with low EQ. Secondly, environment within the family contributes to emotional make-up of an individual. Against this backdrop, an attempt was made through this study to find the impact of gender on EQ and family environment (N=100). A highly significant difference was revealed in EQ and family environment of boys and girls.

Keywords: EQ, Family Environment, Moral orientation

1. Introduction

Emotions are the root forces in the dynamics of human behaviour and personality. But it has been seen that within families, schools and society as a whole, this aspect has often been overlooked. It helps the individual to perceive, understand regulate and harness emotions adaptively in interpersonal relationships^[1]. Researchers have found that even more than IQ, our emotional awareness and ability to handle feelings will determine success and happiness in all walks of life, including family relationships^[2-4]. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are more successful than their counterparts having low emotional intelligence. They are more socially adept, display better social skills and are able to build long term, satisfying relationships^[5].

Emotions are our responses to the world around us, and they are created by the combination of our thoughts, feelings and actions. There are hundreds of emotions, along with their blends, variations, mutations and nuances. Emotional intelligence is the ability of an individual to appropriately and successfully respond to a vast variety of emotional stimuli being elicited from the inner self and immediate environment. Emotional intelligence constitutes three psychological dimensions: emotional sensitivity, emotional maturity and emotional competency, which motivate an individual to recognise truthfully, interpret honestly and handle tactfully the dynamics of human behaviour^[6].

According to Wikipedia (2015), 'emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, assess and control the emotions of oneself, of others, and of groups'^[7]. Having emotional intelligence skills affects both an adolescent's outlook and attitude. Possessing the ability to properly manage stress has a powerful impact on the overall wellness; which varies from being aware of emotional state and reactions to various situations. It can also help to get rid of anxiety, deal with mood swings and avoid depression. Those who lack the skills to deal with these stresses have a higher chance of acting out due to a lack of mental well-being which is directly related to the level of emotional intelligence. The importance of emotional intelligence in adolescence cannot be ignored, as they are at new threshold of life where it is required to make right decisions for the bright future. Developing high emotional intelligence is essential for an adolescent to excel in all perspectives of life.

Family is the most important support system available to the child. Relationship with parents is an important factor in molding the adolescent personality. Parents are viewed as important contributors to early adolescents' emotional intelligence. In all cultures, families are viewed as fundamental influence for their children's and adolescents' wellbeing. Adolescents have a

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reputation of getting along poorly with their families. The teenage boy or girl may be faced with serious problems of adjustment when there is a difference of opinions, ideals and attitudes with their parents. Conflicts may arise between the adolescent and the parents that are difficult to resolve if neither is willing nor able to compromise.

Parents having strong bonding with their children, provide them with a secure atmosphere in which to perceive life as a series of challenges that build confidence, rather than as a progression of unsolvable problems that destroy self-worth. When households are unmanaged emotionally, family relations jam up.

2. Objectives

The present study was undertaken

- To determine the impact of gender, if any, on EQ and family environment
- To study inter correlation between the above said variables.

3. Material and Method

3.1 Participants

The present study was conducted in randomly selected Government Schools of Chandigarh (U.T.).

3.1.1 Selection of Schools: A list of all Government Model Senior Secondary Schools of Chandigarh was obtained from the District Education Office, Chandigarh. From this list, 4 schools were selected by simple random sampling technique.

3.1.2 Selection of Respondents: From each selected school, a comprehensive list of all the students studying in Science Stream of 10+2 was obtained. From this list, 13 boys and 12 girls (25 students) were selected randomly from each of the first 2 schools. From the each of the remaining 2 schools, the order was reverse i.e.12 girls and 13 boys so as to make a total sample of 100 subjects with 50 boys and 50 girls.

3.2 Tools Used

3.2.1 Emotional Quotient Test: Emotional Intelligence was measured with the help of a standardized Emotional

Intelligence Test developed by Codaty (2001) [8]. This test is reported to be highly valid and reliable. There are 69 questions in this test and it is divided into three sections. The first section contains 29 questions based on perception of self, the second section contains 30 questions regarding reaction towards others and the third section contains 10 situational questions. The medium of the test is English. Each item consists of a statement with corresponding three options. They have to put tick mark against the option according to their feelings about the statement.

3.2.2 Family Environment Scale: For determining the perception of adolescents with regard to their family environment, a standardized Family Environment Scale developed by Vohra (1997) was used [9]. The scale is highly reliable and valid. The scale contains 98 items, measuring seven different dimensions names only. The number of items for each dimension is divided equally. Each statement has two possible answers: ‘True’ or ‘False’. These dimensions when measured together give a complete and comprehensive picture of one’s family environment.

- 1) Competitive Framework (CF)
- 2) Cohesion (Co)
- 3) Expressiveness (Ex)
- 4) Independence (In)
- 5) Moral Orientation (Mo)
- 6) Organization (Or)
- 7) Recreational Orientation (Ro)

The scale is in English and requires around 20-25 minutes to finish it.

3.4 Statistical Analysis

For analyzing the data, Karl Pearson’s Coefficient of Correlation was used to find out correlation between EQ and perception about various dimensions of family environment.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Difference in the Mean Scores of Emotional Intelligence and Various Dimensions of Family Environment of Boys and Girls

N=100(50 Boys + 50 Girls)

S. No.	Variable	Sample	Mean	S.D.	S.E.M.	‘t’ value	‘p’ value
1.	Emotional Intelligence	Boys	118.56	12.224	1.729	4.273	<0.01
		Girls	129.52	12.717	1.798		
2.	Competitive Framework	Boys	8.06	1.596	0.226	-0.310	N.S.
		Girls	8.16	1.633	0.231		
3.	Cohesion	Boys	7.62	1.665	0.235	0.469	N.S.
		Girls	7.48	1.297	0.183		
4.	Expression	Boys	7.54	2.215	0.313	-1.893	N.S.
		Girls	8.30	1.776	0.251		
5.	Independence	Boys	5.30	2.092	0.296	2.054	<0.05
		Girls	6.18	2.192	0.310		
6.	Moral Orientation	Boys	8.76	1.559	0.221	0.419	N.S.
		Girls	8.64	1.290	0.182		
7.	Organization	Boys	6.88	1.452	0.205	3.133	<0.01
		Girls	7.84	1.608	1.227		
8.	Recreational orientation	Boys	5.42	1.739	0.246	0.599	N.S.
		Girls	5.24	1.222	0.173		

It is clear from Table -1 that there existed highly significant difference between the mean scores of boys and girls with regard to emotional intelligence (‘t’= 4.273; *p*<0.01) and

organization (‘t’= 3.133; *p*<0.01). In both the cases, girls had higher emotional intelligence and perceived more

organization in their family environment as compared to boys.

Significant difference was revealed between the mean scores of boys and girls with regard to their perception about independence in their family environment ($t= 2054$; $p<0.05$), with girls perceiving more independence as compared to boys.

Regarding emotional intelligence, the present result highlighting girls to have higher emotional intelligence as compared to boys get the support of the findings of Petrides (2004) and Seginer (2004) [10, 11]. They all found females to have higher emotional intelligence as compared to males have higher levels of emotional intelligence than that of females. The probable reason for the present findings might be due to the fact that emotional intelligence primarily deals with managing and expressing one’s emotions. since females tend to be more emotional and intimate in relationships as compared to males, so their emotional intelligence ought to be higher than that of males. This is perhaps because of the society which socializes the two genders differently as has been found by Wing and Love (2001) [12]. Their findings revealed that girls become increasingly more social with age as compared to boys and spend more time growing in the company of their friends.

Moreover, higher emotional intelligence among girls can also be explained in terms of some of their personality characteristics. Girls tend to have more interpersonal relationships than those of boys. They are more sensitive towards their relationships with parents, friends and siblings. All these traits help them to acquire more emotional intelligence as compared to boys.

Table-1 also revealed significant gender differences in perception of adolescents in the area of organization and independence in their family environment. The girls showed higher scores in organization and independence as compared to boys. The justification for girls perceiving more organization in their family environment as compared to boys could be that as childhood draws to an end giving way to adolescence, girls in Indian families are generally groomed in such a way that they can take up the role of good home-maker later in their life. As compared to boys, girls are more involved in planning and organizing various family activities. This might be responsible for making them perceive their family environment more organized as compared to boys.

Regarding independence, the probable reason for the obtained results might be that earlier girls were usually confined within the four walls of the house. No independence was granted to them with regard to choice of career, dressing up, selection of friends, outings etc. Though boys enjoyed more freedom in all the above areas as they were considered as superior to girls and future bread earners. But now great amount of water has flown under the bridge. The whole scenario with regard to rearing up of girls has changed. Girls are given equal opportunities as compared to boys in all the areas, be it educational career, selection of friends, selection of clothes or outings. This change in the societal outlook might be responsible for their perceiving more independence in their family environment as compared to boys.

Table 2: Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Various Dimensions of Family Environment

N=100)

S. No.	Variables	Correlation value (r)
1.	Emotional Intelligence and Competitive Framework	0.293**
2.	Emotional Intelligence and Cohesion	0.272**
3.	Emotional Intelligence and Expression	0.394**
3.	Emotional Intelligence and Independence	0.435**
4.	Emotional Intelligence and Moral Orientation	0.128
5.	Emotional Intelligence and Organization	0.010
6.	Emotional Intelligence and Recreational Organization	0.190

Significant at 0.01 level

It is evident from Table-2 that there existed highly significant positive correlation of emotional intelligence with adolescents’ perception about 4 dimensions of family environment i.e. competitive framework ($r= 0.297$)**, cohesion ($r= 0.272$)**, expression ($r= 0.394$)** and independence ($r= 0.435$)**. This shows that as EQ scores increase, scores of perception about competitive framework, cohesion, expression and independence also increase and vice –versa.

The obtained results are in the line with the findings of Jaswal and Kaur (1990) and Kottman and Johnson (1999) [13, 14]. The explanation for the above findings might be the fact that perception about home setting or environment has important bearing on an adolescent’s behavior in general and social and emotional behavior in particular. When an adolescent perceives that his parents motivate him to excel in all domains including educational and extra-curricular; are ready to help and support all the time and he is getting due share of independence and expression in the family and personal matters then there is no doubt that such a child will

show signs of social and emotional maturity. All these factors will help him to have superior EQ.

On the contrary, when an adolescent perceives that his parents do not take interest in activities; do not encourage him to express and give his inputs in personal and family discussions; do not support and help him at the time of need and put a lot of restrictions on him, then he will lack the ability to know about himself and differentiate his as well as other’s emotions. In short, he would lack social and emotional competence. In such an environment, he is bound to have low EQ.

5. Recommendations

Since perception about family environment has significant relationship to emotional intelligence, so efforts should be made by parents to provide conducive family environment to build emotional competence in children, so that they can better fulfill their various roles in life. Negative and unfavourable family environment attributes lower emotional intelligence. Thus it is important to find ways to provide favourable family environment for children. Some programs

supporting emotional intelligence may take place in parent education. It would be beneficial to design some social emotional learning programs, which can help the parents in reinforcing the above mentioned aspects for better emotional development of children.

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