Emotional Intelligence and Its Relationship to the Moderating Effect of Gender on the Students of Tafila Technical University

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed and interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the level of emotional intelligence of the students of Tafilah Technical University; in addition to finding out whether there are differences in levels of emotional intelligence amongst the two genders. A sample with 222 university students was selected, of which 117 were males, and 105 were females. The scale of emotional intelligence consisted of 41 phrases, which has five Likert steps, and the scale has three levels, viz., low, medium, and high.
The results showed that the levels of emotional intelligence of the university students are average [3.195]. The females excelled the males in the level of emotional intelligence, in all dimensions. The average of the females' grades reached 3.567, and the males' average reached 2.865. The differences showed some statistical indications. The study recommends need of conducting training courses for the students to raise the level of emotional intelligence.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The emotional intelligence [EI] gets a lot of interest from many researchers, and that is due to its importance and effect on the individual. The EI skills give the individual an opportunity to manage himself or herself correctly, to direct his or her [1] energies and achieve what they aspire. The individual who has EI can improve his or her relationships with others positively, and makes adequate adjustment, as the EI effects positively on the life of the individuals. Subsequently, it directs his or her behaviour to face life challenges as well as achieving happiness, by controlling the feelings of anxiety and depression. The individual with the EI has an advantage in managing his or her emotions and self-confidence [2]. The individuals are also flexible in social relationships, which lead to the desire to make his or her own decisions. The individual could be able to face challenges and difficulties easily. When the EI was studied by the scientists, Mayer- Salovey, two of the renowned personalities focused on EI being the ability to perceive emotions, as well as understanding and managing, to facilitate the thinking process [3]. Bar-On [4] projected a different perspective on EI, of which he pointed out knowing the individual himself or herself well, and knowing the emotions of others, and the effective interaction with others, as well as facing everyday situations to achieve adaptation. Joseph and Newmann [5] suggested three models on EI, which are as follows:

1- The ability based on achievement model, which shows EI as a type of emotional ability and is depicted as the ability to solve emotional challenges.
2- Capacity self-report model, where the EI is based on the way, the individual asserts his or her achievements and has accounted accordingly in his or her point of view.
3- The mixed self-report model, that sees EI has the human motives and personal abilities and the factors, which are related to the happiness of the individual [6].

So when talking about EI as focus on the abilities that the individual can be able to develop skills and social competence that he or she has, as a result of it the social management among individuals strategies also show some renowned growth [7]. The abilities may help to build the individual's motivation, to fight faced conflicts, and control emotions to encourage his or her feelings for continuous rise and fall of optimization [8].

EI directs to form a definite shape of individual, by using the emotional knowledge in a useful and meaningful way, so that we can be able to face the difficulties in life and pushes us to improve or maintain our social relationships with others. The EI is considered as the key to creating leadership and affective social links and improving the individual's mood, which helps them to propel their work efficiently [9]. The individual who has the EI skills is characterised by having flexibility in thinking, and is closer to positive feeling in achieving the missions that they aspire. They are successful in making important decisions [10], and are interested in making personal decisions to produce positive results, by self-management in a right way even with depressions [11].

The EI helps in developing the talent of the individual by the progression of knowledge and organising efficiently, where an organization is considered as a necessity even in social relationships, as the latter helps in developing the individual's skills [12].

The EI can help to improve the individual's performance in his work by enhancing the perception development in life situations, and by the control and management of his or her emotions, besides managing and developing social relationships at the time of interaction with others. These all are connected with increasing the academic performance [13], emotional knowledge in specific and the altruistic expertise [14].

According to the previous information the importance of EI and its effect on the life of the individual, and the progress of managing and controlling the emotions, what strategies are used to face depressions, and the failure situations for which he or she was bothered enough in relationships with others is clear. The information are also show the effect of EI on how he or she has created the behavioral motivations to achieve the aspired goals is also.

In conclusion, this study is considered one of the important studies that must be done in our society, so that we can discover the level of EI of the students to offer assistance.

2. PREVIOUS STUDIES

The EI is related to many definitions that are important to different life situations, and affect

how the individual understands the social conditions, and how to organize and manage emotions. In a study, Nelis et al. [15] studied two groups: one experimental group that was objected to practical courses and the situated group were not objected to any training to understand whether there is a capability in enhancing the emotional intelligence. The results indicated that the experimental group showed emotional management skills, and acknowledging it, where the other group did not show that.

A, research by Austin et al. [16] was conducted on 156 students in their first year in medical school, to study the emotional intelligence, sympathy and the exam performance, where the results showed that the females excelled the males in EI.

Parker et al. [17] conducted a study of the relationship between the EI and the academic achievement on a sample of 372 students. The results showed that the academic achievement was strongly connected to the dimensions of EI.

Bertram et al. [18] studied a sample of 150 students from medical faculty in New York and researched in demographic qualities, sympathy, and used the scale to measure the sympathy of doctors and a scale of personal characteristics and EI. It was found that there is a correlation between the level of sympathy and EI and a relationship was also observed between sympathy and personal characteristics. Regarding the demographic factors it was revealed that the Asian and American students had lesser sympathy levels than students from other nationalities. It was also noticed that the female students had a higher sympathy level than male students.

In an experiment, Nwankwo [19] studied the effect of control site and the educational level on the EI of university students. Two hundred persons were chosen where 100 were male students and 100 were female students. The scale of control site and the scale of Elwere used. Studies revealed that the control site affected the EI. On the other hand, the educational level didn't show any statistical significance among students.

Lancashire et al. [2] studied the EI and its connection with demographic, social and economical characteristics among 322 8th-grade students and a test was done to detect the level of EI. The results showed that 50% of students had a good level of EI and the level of EI was higher for females than males.

In a study, Patel [20] examined the level of EI and its relationship with the gender of the students. A sample of 120 university students was selected, of which 60 students were female and 60 students were male, to find out the difference of EI among them. The results showed that there were differences in the EI levels and the females excelled the males.

Sandhu [21] studied the creativity and EI on a sample of 200 students. The results showed that there is a high level of creativity and EI for the science faculty students in comparison with the commerce students. The results also showed that the EI and creativity levels of females were above average, whereas for males the values were below average. It also showed that there is an effect of EI on the creativity.

In an experiment Hsieh et al. [22] studied the EI and personal relationships of college students of Taiwan University, and the researchers tried to understand the related factors. All together 587 subject data were analyzed for this reason. The results showed that the EI and personal relationships levels were above average. It also showed that there are differences related to gender and it was in favour of the females. There was a positive correlation between the levels of EI and the personal relationships.

Another study [23] aimed to compare the EI levels of the female and male players in college. The sample reached 40 females, and 40 males, of which the EI scale was used. The study consisted of 34 clauses and the results pointed out that the male players have higher EI levels than the female players.

A sample of 60 females and 60 males were studied to know the level of EI of the college students [24]. The results pointed out the statistical differences in the level of EI of females and males. It was found that the females got a higher level of EI than males.

A study [25] was conducted to focus on the relationship between EI and adjustment methods, and the self-learning satisfaction of nursing students. The study sample consisted of 74 students. Three variables were measured, viz., EI, adjustment method and the self-learning satisfaction. A connected relationship was found between the EI and self-learning satisfaction in addition to adjustment method.

A sample of 400 high school students were studied in Iran [26] to observe the role of social competence skills in EI, and school adjustment. The results pointed out the existence of a positive correlation between EI and school adjustment, and between the EI and social skills.

3. STUDY IMPORTANCE

The importance of this study is

- For throwing light on the EI levels of Tafila Technical University students.
- To reflect a clear image of authority in the university to conduct certain actions to help the students in raising the level of EI of the students.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- The research aimed to answer the question of, what is the level of EI among university students.
- To what extent will gender affect the levels of EI among the university students.

5. STUDY LIMITS

This study was defined by the bachelor degree students enrolled in the second semester of the year 2017- 2018. Female and male students were chosen from engineering, science, and educational science, administrative departments, and from different academic levels, in the Tafila Technical University.

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1 Study Design

This study is considered as a descriptive study.

6.2 Study Statistic

- To answer the first question, the means and standard deviations were used
- To answer the second question T-test was used.
- Alpha Cronbach was used to find out the stability coefficient.

6.3 Society of Study and Sample

The study society consisted of 3685 Tafila University students enrolled in the second semester in the year of 2017-2018. A random sample was chosen, which was 6% of the studied society. The study sample consisted of 222 students, of which 117 were male students and 105 were female students. The sample was chosen from engineering, science, and educational science, administrative departments, and from different academic levels.

6.4 Study Scale

The scale of the researchers Nejmeh and Belal [27] was used. The scale consisted of 41 clauses, distributed in four dimensions as follows:

Emotional knowledge: It has nine clauses. It measures the attention and correct awareness of emotions and the ability to express emotions.

Regulation of emotion: It has ten phrases. It measures the skill of reaching emotional balance and self-control.

Sympathy: It has 13 phrases. It is considered as a skill to read and acknowledge the emotions of others, even if they don't express them.

Social connection: It has nine phrases. It concentrates on the individual's ability in managing social relationships with others, and his or her skills in effecting and leading them.

Each phrase has five Likert scales, according to the following choices:

Always- usually- sometimes- rarely- never And the grade is distributed according to:

5, 4, 3, 2, 1

Stability coefficient was extracted using the Alpha Cronbach factor of the scale in addition to its dimensions as seen in Table 1.

After preparing the scale, it was distributed among the sample subjects. They read the phrases and put a sign to the choice that applies to them knowing that the answers are going to be treated secretly and used for scientific research reasons only.

Table 1. Stability coefficient of EI and its dimensions

Social contacts	Sympathy	Regulation of emotions	Emotional Knowledge	EI
0.875	0.838	0.810	0.844	0.920
9	13	10	9	41

There were three scale of the EI, which are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. EI levels

High	Medium	Low
More than 3.67	3.66- 2.34	2.33

7. RESULTS

The mean and standard deviation numbers were collected to find out the answer of the first question, i.e., the level of EI among the university students. The data are shown in Table 3.

To find the level of each dimension of the emotional intelligence, the mean and standard deviation numbers where collected and it has been shown in Table 4.

The means and standard deviation were collected, in addition to finding the known differences. The T-test was conducted to answer the second question which is, what extent gender will moderate the levels of EI among the

university students and it has been shown in Table 5.

8. DISCUSSION

The results pointed out that the level of EI of university students was in the average level, in all the fields. The emotional knowledge, the emotion organisation and the sympathy communication were in the average level. It could be attributed to the nature of the culture in our society, and the method of social upbringing that are used with the youth. However, it doesn't give significance in teaching the EI skills. The learning and teaching strategies that are used whether it is in school or university, does not encourage improving the EI skills, where there are many constraints in the culture and family that limits the individuals' freedom in expressing their emotions or exposing it. All of these affected the levels and fields of EI.

Regarding the EI level according to the gender variable, the females excelled the males in the level of EI and its fields. The differences were

Table 3. Means and standard deviations of the subjects of the study sample according to the emotional intelligence scale

Variable	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Emotional intelligence	221	3.195	.4820

Table 4. Means and standard deviation of the emotional intelligence dimensions of the subjects of the study sample

Dimensions	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Emotional knowledge	222	3.300	.552
Regulation of emotion	222	3.210	.6277
Sympathy	221	3.130	.6016
Social media	222	3.201	.6190

Table 5. T-test to find the known differences among the subjects of the sample, in the levels of EI and its dimensions

Dimensions	Gender	N	Mean	Std deviation	t	df	Sig
Emotional Knowledge	Male	117	3.068	.0477	6.592	220	.000
	Female	105	3.515	.0481			
Regulation of emotion	Male	117	2.926	.0416	7.883	220	.000
	Female	105	3.515	.0638			
Sympathy	Male	117	2.707	.0338	16.598	219	.000
	Female		3.604				
Social media	Male	117	2.756	.0386	14.178	220	.000
	Female	105	3.612	.0469			
Emotional intelligence	Male	117	2.865	.0228	15.750	219	.000
	Female	105	3.567	.0397			

with a statistical reference in the level of EI between females and males, which was in favour of the women. It could be attributed to the fact that the culture is always constraining the females and limits their freedom in expressing themselves, and because the females even in recent times feel shortfall, when she compares herself to the male. With her conflicts with the culture to prove her, all of that led her to aspire the skills and develop herself in the society and achieve her goals, which was reflected on her EI levels. And the results of this study concurred with the previous studies [2,16,18,20,21,22] that pointed out the excelling of females over males, in the levels of EI, and this contradicts study [23].

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends conducting other studies in different educational levels as well as connecting EI with other variables. The study also suggests conducting training programs and workshops to help the students in improving and enhancing their EI skills.

10. CONCLUSION

The results of the study showed that the EI of the undergraduate students is average. So it can be concluded that there is a need for rebuilding the social and psychological environment for the students, and editing the socialisation methods, which the family uses in upbringing their kids also of the learning and teaching strategies in the schools and colleges. These correspond with the current era, as to provide the students with the opportunity to improve their EI levels, and that is due to the correlation of EI with the adjustment, achievement, mental health, and satisfaction.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, patient's written consent has been collected and preserved by the author.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

As per international standard or university standard written ethical approval has been collected and preserved by the author.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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