



GENDER DIFFERENCES IN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES OF HYDERABAD CITY

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ABSTRACT:

Emotional intelligence is conceptualized as the ability to understand one's own and others feelings and respond to appropriate ways in various life situations. It is emerging as the most important and effective personal skill of the new century. The present study is an attempt to examine the differences between female and male athletes of Hyderabad city with respect to their emotional intelligence. It was assumed that female athletes would have high emotional intelligence as compared to the male athletes. For examination of this hypothesis the "Emotional Intelligence Test" developed by Dr. N. K. Chadha (1998) was applied on all of the participants of the study (i.e. 70 female and 70 male athletes). Statistical analysis by computation of "t-test" revealed a significant difference (i.e. $t=3.795$, $p<0.01$) in the emotional intelligence of female and male athletes of Hyderabad city. The results confirmed the hypothesis. In the case of gender differences in relation to emotional intelligence, findings of the current study indicate that females are more emotionally intelligent than male athletes. The higher level of emotional intelligence of female than male in Sindhi surroundings are explained in terms of traditional trends, pattern of society and social roles assigned to each gender with respect to culture in Sindh.



INTRODUCTION:

Emotional intelligence is one of the most widely discussed topics in current psychology, having matured recently with the aid of lavish international media attention. Psychologists have proposed that understanding the emotions of oneself and others is the key to a satisfying life. Those people who are self-aware and sensitive to others manage their affairs with wisdom and grace, even in adverse circumstances. On the other hand, those who are “emotionally illiterate” blunder their way through lives marked by misunderstandings, frustrations and failed relationships. A scientific understanding of this emotional intelligence may allow us to train our emotional skills so that we can live more fulfilling and productive lives. Emotional intelligence (EI) has recently emerged as a key construct in modern-day psychological research. It has attracted much attention in recent years. According to Matthews, *et al.* (2004) emotional intelligence has been the target of widespread interest owing to the increasing personal importance attributed to emotional management for people in modern society. It is believed that EI can be trained and improved in various social contexts (educational, occupational, and interpersonal) and that personal and societal benefits will follow from investment in programs to increase EI. There is currently a growing impetus towards the provision of personal, educational, and workplace interventions that purport to increase EI. Furthermore, EI has been commonly claimed to play an important role in modern society by determining real-life outcomes above and beyond the contribution of general



intellectual ability and personality factors (Goleman, 1995; Saarni, 1999). Thus, EI is claimed to be positively related to academic achievement, occupational success and satisfaction, and emotional health and adjustment. According to Goleman, (1995) emotional intelligence, in fact, has been claimed to be even more important than intellectual intelligence in achieving success in life.

The term emotional intelligence first appeared in a series of academic articles of Mayer and Salovey (1993). Goleman (1995 p.36) defines EI as “the abilities such as being able to motivate oneself; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one’s mode and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope. Bar-On (1997) defines EI as “an array of personal, emotional, and social capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one’s ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures”. According to Mayer and Salovey (1997) , E I involves “abilities to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotions; to access and/or generate feelings so as to assist thought; the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge; and to reflectively regulate emotions as to promote emotional and intellectual growth” (p.10). This definition suggests that intelligence and emotions are interrelated, emotions make thinking intelligent and one thinks intelligently about emotions. This definition was revised by Mayer, *et al.* (2000b) and more formal definition of EI was proposed as “the set of abilities that account for how people’s emotional perception and understanding vary in their accuracy. More formally, emotional intelligence is defined as the



ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion and thought, understand and reason with emotion, and regulate emotion in the self and others" (p.401).

According to Khan, *et al.* (2006) the concept of dealing effectively with life's problems and excitements intelligently is called emotional intelligence. This concept is an umbrella term that captures broad collections of individual skills and dispositions, usually referred to as soft skills or inter and intra-personal skills, that are outside the traditional areas of specific knowledge, general intelligence and technical or professional skills. Most of the authors on the topic note that in order to be a well adjusted, fully functioning member of society, such as, family member, spouse, employee, etc. one must possess both general intelligence (IQ) and emotional intelligence (EI). In short, EI is an array of non-cognitive abilities and competencies that influence a person's ability to cope with environmental demands and pressures.

Singh (2001) describes in his book "emotional intelligence at work" that 'Emotional Quotient' (EQ) is used interchangeably with emotional intelligence. In simple terms, this can be defined as knowing what feels good, what feels bad, and how to get from bad to good. A more formal academic definition refers to emotional awareness and emotional management skills which provide the ability to balance emotion and reason so as to maximize long term happiness. The level of EI is neither genetically fixed, nor does it develop only in early childhood. Unlike Intelligence Quotient (IQ),



which does not increase after adolescence, EI is largely learned and continuous to develop and improve throughout life and is conditioned by life's experiences. In normal course of life time, EI tend to increase as people learn to be more aware of their moods, to effectively handle distressing emotions, and to listen and empathize. In short, as people become more mature, they can acquire certain emotional competencies that lead to happy life and outstanding performance at work. It is being increasingly recognized that EI can be effectively applied to the unique requirements of any organization. The principles of EQ can help employees become better team players, show greater creativity in their work and increase overall productivity through the powerful techniques of integrating and applying emotional intelligence at the work place. Social and personal competencies are vital for a healthy and productive life. Self-awareness, optimism and empathy enhance satisfactions and productivity not only at work but in other areas of life as well.

The consequences of having low EQ and high EQ were discovered by Singh, (2001). According to him low EQ is likely to lead to general unhappiness as seen in the feelings of:

- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
| * Anger | * Failure | * Fear | * Disappointment |
| * Frustration | * Obligation | * Guilt | * Resentment |
| * Emptiness | * Victimization | * Bitterness | * Dependence |
| * Depression | * Loneliness | * Instability | * Lethargy |



A high EQ leads to positive feelings such as:

- | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| * Motivation | * Appreciation | * Friendship | * Self-control |
| * Satisfaction | * Freedom | * Fulfillment | * Autonomy |
| * Peace | * Desire | * Awareness | * Contentment |
| * Focus | * Elation | * Happiness | * Balance |

Research on emotional intelligence has revealed that people having high EQ also show the signs of high self-esteem. They are happier, healthier, successful and compassionate towards others than the people having low EQ.

GENDER DIFFERENCES AND E I:

Psychologists refer to differences in the behavior of females and males as “gender differences”. Some books and popular magazines emphasize the differences between genders when it comes to attitudes or EI. Gender differences have been examined in many diverse cultures around the world. Matthews, *et al.* (2004) states that with respect to gender, it is clear that different operational indices and indeed conceptualizations of EI lead to notably different hypotheses, conjectures, and / or empirical findings regarding gender differences. Goleman (1995) devotes an entire chapter to discussing emotional differences between the sexes. On the assumption that there are differences between man and women in norms of emotional behavior, EI resides in applying the correct norm at the correct time. There are several researches has been conducted to explore differences in EI between both sexes (e.g. Goleman, 1995; Tapai, 1998; Sutarso 1998; Bar-On, 2000; Petrides & Furnhan 2000; Mayer, *et al.* 2000; Mayer, *et al.* 2001;



Roberts, Zeidner, *et al.* 2001; and Petrides, Furnhan & Martin, 2004). This paper looks at gender differences in EI. It is a popular, unusual and interesting area for research in the current age. Gender differences in EI might be the result of social roles assigned to each gender with respect to culture as well as the specific nature of society.

SPORT PSYCHOLOGY AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ATHLETES:

Cockerill (2002) states that sports today places considerable demands on performers and requires the support for specialists to facilitate the integration of mind and body, especially to achieve success as a professional athlete. In this regard, sport psychology is available to athletes for useful advices and support. Psychological factors are recognized as having an important part to play in the attainment of success in sport. It is also recognized that sport psychologists can help to make the difference between winning and losing. Thus, the demand for psychological services in sport is increasing.

A sport psychologist, Lawther (1972) discovered that most studies of male athletes report them to rank high in such traits as self-confidence, extroversion, leadership, dominance, emotional maturity, social poise, having high level of aspiration and consideration for others. Whereas, female athletes seem to differ from male athletes only in concern for their self-image (in this case, a desirable feminine image); and in their sensitivity to male social attitudes toward female's athletic



participation. Female athletes are more concerned with appearance and aesthetic aspects in sports.

In light of the sport psychologists views as mentioned above it can be believed that professional athletes belonging to both sexes have few differences in respect of their personality traits and qualities and hence, their level of EI may be different. Thus, keeping in mind all the above considerations the present study is aimed to evaluate differences in EI of males and females athletes in Sindhi setup. There is no evidence to conduct such type of research in Sindh, Pakistan. Therefore, authors were motivated to conduct such type of research. It is fairly new study in the Sindhi society. Keeping in view the trends, values and traditions of Sindhi society, where the women are expected as full of patience, conform and tend to be controlled on their emotions, it was hypothesized that “the scores of female athletes will be higher than male athletes on the scale of EI at Hyderabad city”.

METHOD:

SAMPLE

Participants of this study consisted of 140 (i.e. 70 male and 70 female) professional athletes of Hyderabad city. The sample was selected through random sampling technique from different work places of Hyderabad city. The mean age of male and female athletes was 40.5 and 37.8 years respectively. Most of the respondents belong to middle class families.



PROCEDURE:

The 'Emotional Intelligence Test' prepared by Dr. N. K. Chadha, (1998) for application in working environment, was used in this study to explore the desired findings. The test comprised 15 items to measure the low and high levels of Emotional Intelligence (EI). It has been standardized at different workplaces. Many issues concerning EI, for e.g. control over emotions; to overcome frustration; to maintain healthy interpersonal relations; empathizing and helping people in distress; to tolerate anger and offensive remarks; high level of optimism; ability to handle threatening and stressful situation tactfully; taking cool decisions under irritating situations; self awareness; acting as emotional coaches to manage the emotions of upset individuals; calming down during disturbing situations; reacting normally to the situation of feeling failure and embarrassment; to be harmonious while dealing with groups and handling relations effectively under awkward circumstances were evaluated by this test.

The test was individually administered, to which the subject had to respond by marking any one response from the five responses already given along with each item of the questionnaire indicating the highest to lowest EI, for example:

* You have just learnt that you have been ignored for a promotion by the management for which you were eligible. Moreover, one of your juniors has been selected for the same promotion. You are upset and feeling frustrated. What do you do?



- a. Ignore it—it was your bad luck.
- b. Talk it over with your boss, bringing out the facts about your contribution and ask for reconsideration of the management's decision.
- c. Start abusing the colleague who superseded you, leveling allegations of manipulation and corruption against him and instigate the union leaders to organize protests against the management.
- d. Move to court and obtain a stay order and vow to teach befitting lesson to the management through legal battle.
- e. Resign from the organization.

The responses showing highest to lowest level of EI were scored as per scoring key of the test. The obtained scores were statistically analyzed. The independent two sample t-test was applied to determine whether there was any significant difference between the responses of male and female athletes on the overall test. The statistical analysis was carried out by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

RESULTS:

The findings as shown in Table 1 ($t=3.795$, $df=138$, $p<0.01$) indicate a significant difference between the obtained scores of male and female athletes. The overall results of the study as given in Table 1, Figure 1, reveal that female athletes' ratings on the emotional intelligence test is obviously higher than male athletes of Hyderabad city.

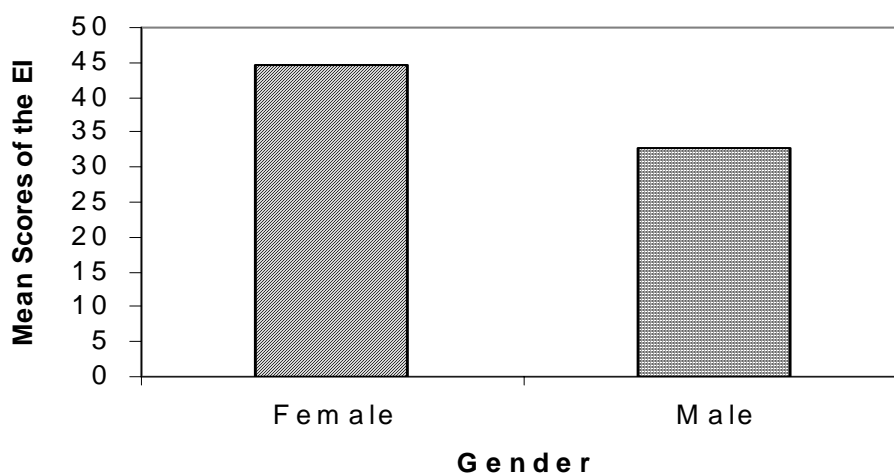


TABLE NO: 1
MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION AND T-VALUE
OF THE FEMALE AND MALE ATHLETES' SCORES
ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TEST

Gender	Number	Mean	S.D	t-value
Female	70	44.7320	9.7231	3.795**
Male	70	32.6414	8.0624	

df = 138 **p< 0.01

FIGURE: 1
COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES OF FEMALE AND
MALE ATHLETES WITH RESPECT TO THE
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI)





DISCUSSION:

The results of the present study which aimed to investigate the gender differences in the emotional intelligence among the Hyderabad city athletes prove that female athletes are more emotionally intelligent than the male part of the population. Hence, it confirms the hypothesis which states that, “the female athletes score will be higher than male athletes on the scale of EI in Hyderabad city”.

The findings of this study are consistent with earlier researches done in this area. For example, Schutt, *et al.* (1998) predicted and found gender differences in their measure of trait EI with females scoring higher than males. Argyle (1990) demonstrated that women are more empathic, perceptive, adaptable and socially skilled than men. The fact that women are slightly superior to men in perceiving emotion has been known through tests of non verbal perceptions (cited in Goleman, 1998). The study carried out by Petrides, *et al.* (2004) supports the view that people perceive emotional intelligence as a primarily feminine attribute. Bar-On (2000) found in several diverse societies that women are more aware of their emotions, show more empathy and act more socially responsible than men. The findings of our investigation are also supported by the results of the study conducted by Abdullah, *et al.* (2004) indicated that girls have higher EQ than boys. Mayer, Caruso & Salovey (2000) discovered that women perform better than men on the twelve tasks of the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS) in all the scoring procedures. They found significant relationship between



gender and EQ. Roberts, Zeidner *et al.* (2001) also declared that a sample of women scored higher than men on the vast majority of subsets comprising MEIS.

The reason why female athletes indicated higher level of EI compared to male athletes was due to the fact that during childhood socialization process females receive significantly more education to manifest emotions in milder ways from their parents than do male in most of the societies, and that make them more emotionally skilled and competent than male. Abdullah, *et al.* (2004) argues to justify the findings of his research that boys are always perceived as stronger person compared to girls, as a result their emotional needs are often neglected and more attentions are paid to the emotional needs of the girls. Thus, the attention and care paid to girls in a society may be the cause to improve their emotional competence.

We may offer a social role interpretation for the presence of gender differences in EI. Our society expect males to be more assertive, masterful and aggressive than females and also expect females to be more nurturing, obedient, responsible, affectionate, caring, contented and more concerned for the wellbeing of others than males. Due to these contrasting expectations females have to control on their emotions and manifest higher level of EI than males as evident from the results of the present study.

The gender differences in EI estimates might vary as a function of emotion display rules, which are known to be culture dependent (Brody & Hall, 2000). Gender differences in emotional intelligence may be occurred



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because of a number of converging factors, including contemporary cultural and traditional trends and orientations. In the traditional Sindhi society where the males are more likely to express dominance over females, the outward expressions of any form of negative feelings and emotions is not considered to be appropriate for the females. Therefore, females who are still adhering to the traditional roles assigned by the society were the ones who scored higher on the given scale of emotional intelligence than males.



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