



GENDER AND AGE DIFFERENCES IN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG YOGA PRACTITIONERS

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ABSTRACT

The concept of emotional intelligence or emotional quotient is increasingly being recognized as a key determinant to the professional and personal success in one's life. The current study aims to assess the influence of gender and age on the level of emotional intelligence among the Yoga practitioners in Chennai city. Data was collected using Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) 2007 on the sample of sixty three yoga practitioners practicing simplified kundalini yoga (SKY) in the age group ranging between 21-60 years. The independent t test results of the study show that emotional intelligence of male yoga respondents are greater than female yoga respondents. However, the difference is significant between male and female respondents on the personal competencies such as self awareness and self regulation but significant difference is not found for social competencies such as empathy and social skills. The findings of anova test further highlights that older age group between 51-60 years show greater level of emotional intelligence than the other two age groups between 21-35 and 36-50.

KEYWORDS: Age, Gender, Emotional Intelligence, Simplified Kundalini Yoga

INTRODUCTION:

Over a decade, the concept of emotional intelligence has proved to be one of the important factors for achieving success in both personal life and professional career. Past studies on yoga and emotional intelligence revealed that few minutes of yoga practice improved emotional regulation; inter personal relationship and spiritual growth (Kristeller, 2007)[1]. From the yogic viewpoint, there are three important energy channels called as ‘nadis’ in human body. Regular practice of yoga will activate all these three channels such as right (solar channel), left (lunar channel) and central channel which is related to spiritual intelligence and helps in the enhancement of emotional intelligence (Bhattacharya, 2007)[2]. Research studies on Impact of yoga on emotional intelligence among college students by Sidhaye and Anjali (2007)[3], Krishnan and Mulla (2007)[4] and Monk-Turner and Turner (2010)[5] were significant and proved that yoga played an indispensable role in enhancing the level of emotional intelligence. Further research conducted by Adhia et al., (2010)[6], Ganpat and Nagendra, (2011)[7] among managers also stressed the importance of yoga in the development of emotional intelligence. In this context, the present study is undertaken to analyze the influence of gender and age on the level of emotional intelligence on the respondents who are practicing simplified kundalini yoga.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND GENDER DIFFERENCE:

Past research studies on gender difference and emotional intelligence had reported mixed results and findings. Kaneez (2006) [8] has found that there was significant difference between men and women in the level of emotional intelligence. The study also reported that men showed more assertiveness, able to recognize them and manage according to the situation independently than women. Moreover, findings of studies reported by Chu (2002)[9], Khalli (2011)[10] and Ramakrishnan (2013)[11] revealed that men have higher emotional intelligence than those women. On the contrary, the findings of research studies by King (1999)[12], Wing and Love (2001)[13] and Singh (2002)[14] revealed that women have high level of intelligence than men. Females tend to be more sensitive and intimate in relationships with parents, friends and siblings and hence help women to develop more emotional intelligence than male. However, some studies on emotional intelligence by Shin (2011)[15], Latha (2012)[16], Rani (2013)[17] and Hans et al., (2013)[18] proved that there was no significant difference between men and women.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND AGE DIFFERENCES:

With respect to age, research studies by Extremera et al., (2006)[19] and Mayer et al., (1990)[20] have found that older adults above 50 years of age perform significantly in all the dimensions of emotional intelligence. On the contrary, some studies had shown negative correlation between age and emotional awareness because it was found from the study, that older people have problems in recognizing their emotions (Day & Carroll, 2004)[21]. An interesting relationship between emotional intelligence and age was exhibited in the study conducted by Derksen, Kramer, & Katzko (2002)[22], where 873 respondents ranging in the age group between 19 and 84 were participants. The study revealed that emotional intelligence peaked in the age group between 35 and 44 and decreased in older age.

METHODOLOGY:

Description of the sample:

The sample respondents represent yoga practitioners who practice simplified kundalini yoga and those who have completed M.A in ‘Yoga for human excellence’ from Madras University. For the purpose of the present study, yoga practitioners who occupy the position of Assistant professors in simplified kundalini yoga with minimum three years of practice of simplified kundalini yoga were taken as the eligibility criteria for the selection of respondents. A total of 63 Yoga practitioners (28 male and 35 female) from between the age group of 25 – 60 years were taken as sample for the current study.

Tools used for the study:

The current study is based on the primary data elicited through a well framed structured questionnaire. The statements were adapted from Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) developed by Lane et al.,(2009)[23]. The questionnaire focused on four dimensions of emotional intelligence such as self awareness, self regulation, empathy and social skills. Four point likert scales such as always, often, rarely and never was used to test the level of emotional intelligence. The highest score 4 was assigned to ‘always’, 3 to ‘often’, 2 to ‘rarely’ and the least score 1 was assigned to ‘never’. The cronbach alpha reliability of the questionnaire shows .932 which is highly reliable.

Sampling and statistical technique used:

Convenience sampling method is adopted for the study. Independent t test was used to identify the gender difference on the level of emotional intelligence and Anova was adopted to determine the significant difference, if any, on the level of emotional intelligence across the different age groups. The results of the statistical tools thus applied are summarized and discussed subsequently in the following paragraphs, which are as follows:

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION:

Gender and Emotional intelligence:

Ho – There is no significant difference between the dimensions of Emotional intelligence and gender of SKY yoga practitioners.

The independent t test was applied to analyze if there is significant difference in the gender on the dimensions of emotional intelligence. The following table-1 summarizes the results of gender difference among yoga practitioners in Chennai city. It is inferred from the table-I that the mean scores of male yoga practitioners in the dimensions of self-awareness (3.678>3.446) and self regulation (3.653>3.362) are greater than the mean scores of female yoga practitioners and the difference is significant statistically at 5% level. This indicates that male yoga practitioners possess higher level of personal competencies. In respect of social competencies, though the male yoga practitioners mean scores are slightly higher than female yoga practitioners in the dimensions of empathy (3.699>3.530), social skills (3.535>3.450), the significant value (p value) shows that there is no significant difference between male and female yoga practitioners statistically. Therefore, Ho is rejected for the dimensions of self awareness and self regulation between male and female at 5% level of significance. Hence it is concluded that there is significant difference between male and female for the dimensions of self awareness and self regulation between male and female of yoga practitioners. This suggests that male yoga practitioners possess higher level of emotional intelligence in all the dimensions in general and personal competencies such as self awareness and self regulation in particular.

Table - 1

Gender differences in the level of EI among SKY yoga practitioners

Dimensions Of EI	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' value	P value (Sig.value)
self-awareness	Male yoga practitioners	28	3.6786	.37643	2.269	.027*
	Female yoga practitioners	35	3.4464	.42366		
self regulation	Male yoga practitioners	28	3.6536	.39109	2.845	.006**
	Female yoga practitioners	35	3.3629	.41237		
Empathy	Male yoga practitioners	28	3.6990	.37764	1.599	.115
	Female yoga practitioners	35	3.5306	.44313		
Social skills	Male yoga practitioners	28	3.5357	.54311	.690	.493
	Female yoga practitioners	35	3.4500	.44371		
Overall EI	Male yoga practitioners	28	3.6417	.38301	2.099	.040*
	Female yoga practitioners	35	3.4475	.34988		

**** denotes significant at 1% level * denotes significant at 5% level**

Age and Emotional intelligence:

Ho - There is no significant difference between the means of Emotional intelligence scores and different age groups of SKY yoga practitioners.

A glance at Table-2 clearly shows that Yoga practitioners among the age group between 51-60 years are higher in the level of EI than the age group between 21-35 and 36-50 years. This is indicated in the mean scores of personal competencies of emotional intelligence such as self awareness (3.70>3.40,3.61), self regulation (3.68>3.59,3.29) and empathy (3.78>3.67,3.44).The F value for self awareness (3.141), self regulation (5.657) and empathy (3.818) represented in the Anova results under table-2 denotes significance at 5% level. But the mean scores of social skills (3.5>2.9,2.8) reveals that yoga practitioners in the age group between 51-60 years are greater in EI than 21-35 and 36-50 years, the F value in the Anova table for social skills (.454) does not show any significant difference statistically within the three age groups.

Therefore Ho is rejected for the dimensions of self awareness, self regulation and empathy but accepted for social skill dimension because there is no significant difference between the means of emotional intelligence scores for the age group between 51-60 years. Thus it can be concluded

that emotional intelligence is high among the age group between 51-60 years in all the dimensions of EI. Further, the gradual increase in the mean scores across different age groups in the level of emotional intelligence shows that emotional intelligence increases as age increases thereby indicating the linear relationship between age and emotional intelligence.

Further, the results of post hoc Duncan test reveal that for the dimension of emotional intelligence such as self awareness and empathy there are differences in the mean scores between the age group 21-35 years and 51-60 years but no such difference between the age group 21-35 years and 36-50 years and between 36-50 years and 51-60 years was observed.

For the second dimension of emotional intelligence such as self regulation, there is difference in the mean scores for the age group 21-35 years in comparison to 36-50 years and 51-60 years but no difference was found between 36-50 years and 51-60 years. With regard to social skills, there is no significant difference among the three age groups such as 21-35 years, 36-50 years and 51-60 years.

Table - 2

Influence of different Age groups on the dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

Dimensions Of EI	Age groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F value	P value (Sig value)
Self awareness	21- 35 years	26	3.4038 ^a	.43201	3.141	.050 *
	36 - 50 years	22	3.6136 ^{ab}	.37581		
	51 - 60 years	15	3.7083 ^b	.38864		
	Total	63	3.5496	.41672		
Self regulation	21- 35 years	26	3.2962 ^a	.42472	5.657	.006**
	36 - 50 years	22	3.5909 ^b	.34766		
	51 - 60 years	15	3.6867 ^b	.41381		
	Total	63	3.4921	.42552		
Empathy	21- 35 years	26	3.4451 ^a	.45951	3.818	.027*
	36 - 50 years	22	3.6753 ^{ab}	.33916		
	51 - 60 years	15	3.7810 ^b	.38129		
	Total	63	3.6054	.42060		
Social skills	21- 35 years	26	3.4183 ^a	.46629	.454	.638
	36 - 50 years	22	3.5284 ^a	.42596		
	51 - 60 years	15	3.5500 ^a	.61564		
	Total	63	3.4881	.48812		

** denotes significant at 1% level * denotes significant at 5% level

Summary and Conclusion

The current study is an attempt to analyze the influence of gender and age on the different dimensions of emotional intelligence such as self awareness, self regulation, empathy and social skills. The results revealed that there was no gender difference between male and female were observed in the level of emotional intelligence. Thus the results are in consistent with the findings of Shin (2011), Latha (2012), Rani (2013) and Hans et al., (2013) but not in consistent with the findings of Ramakrishnan (2013).

Among the three age groups i.e., 21-35, 36-50, 51-60 years, it was found that Yoga practitioners in the age group between 51-60 years were significantly high in comparison to the other two age groups. The findings are in consistent with Extremera et al., (2006) and Mayer et al., (1999) but not with (Day & Carroll, 2004).

Besides gender and age, other demographic variables such as ethnicity, culture and other socio economic variable can also be investigated on the Yoga practitioners to study their influence on emotional intelligence. Further these variables can also be used to explore the mediating effects between gender and age on emotional intelligence for future research.

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