

## Examining the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Aggression among Undergraduate Students of Karachi

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### ABSTRACT

*The study explored the relationship between undergraduate students' emotional intelligence and aggression. It considered three hypotheses 1) There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and aggression of undergraduate students; 2) There is no significant difference between emotional intelligence of males and female undergraduate students; and 3) There is no significant difference between the aggression of male and female undergraduate student. Seventy five male and seventy five female, with a total of one hundred and fifty, undergraduate students participated in the study. The students ranged in age from 18 to 24 years. Two questionnaires were administered to gather data. All participants completed i) Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale as a measure of emotional intelligence, (Wong & Law, 2002), and ii) Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992), as a measure of aggression. Pearson product-moment correlations were examined indicating an overall significant negative correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Aggression ( $r = -.212, p < .005$ ). For second and third hypotheses Independent samples *t* tests indicated significant gender differences with males scoring higher on Aggression ( $t=5.093, df=148, p<.000$ ) and females scoring higher on Emotional Intelligence ( $t=-9.487, df =148, p< .000$ ) respectively.*

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, use of emotions, aggression, physical aggression

### INTRODUCTION

Emotional Intelligence is a relatively new concept in Pakistan in general and educational context in particular. However, the conceptual connection between low EI and anti-social (particularly having conflicts in social settings) is well entrenched in mainstream research. Emotional Intelligence (henceforth EI) may be defined as the ability to perceive, understand and regulate one's emotions or another person's emotions (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000; Salovey, & Mayer, 1997). On the contrary, aggression can be damaging at personal and social level because aggressive individuals experience difficulty interpreting situations as a result of that they become violent or isolated, (Calvete, & Orue, 2010). Mehmood, (2013), evaluates that since Pakistan has low literacy rate and abject poverty due to which problems arising out of emotional mal-adjustment are considered to be least important thus resulting in more violent episodes of expression,

In a similar study, Shahzad, Sarmad, Abbas and Khan, (2010), demonstrate that academic qualification in Pakistan does not enhance self-development, self-management, and self-control. Sterrett, (2000), also indicates that if aggression is bridled with rationality then it can effectively equip human beings with the right measure to deal with conflicting situations. Self-control is an outcome of proper use and regulations of emotions that can also reduce or minimize aggression, (Wong, Wong & Chau, 2001). Mushtaq, (2007), conducted a study on aggressive children's status with children of their own age group. The findings revealed that aggressive children displayed fewer social problem-solving abilities compared with non-

aggressive children. Liao, (2003), has demonstrated that EI to be negatively correlated with aggression and delinquency. Emotional intelligence skills are important resources for enhancing students' learning, success, attitudes, academic performance and psychological well-being (Wong, Wong & Chau, 2001). Another study conducted by Formica, (1998,) revealed a similar negative correlation between aggressive behavior and the Mayor Emotional Intelligence Scale, (). College students' self-reported account of drug abuse and aggressive behavior correlated negatively with Mayor Salovey Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test, (2000). However, Khan, Iqbal, Tariq, and Zadeh, (2006), found no significant differences in overall intelligence of both genders.

The current study intends to focus on the relationship between EI and Aggression in general and with a particular reference to gender. Despite the importance of EI in every aspect of life, it has been scarcely applied with the combination of aggression to educational setting in Pakistan. Keeping in view the need of employing the construct of EI it is hypothesized that if aggression is driven by emotions it can cause enormous damage because emotions are believed to be more primitive than the rational brain. In order to acquire rationality one needs to use EI which will presumably keep aggression under control. According to Lochman, Powell, Clanton, and McElroy, (2001), "Anger and aggression in children and adolescents are increasingly important topics to today's educators and psychologists". The link between EI and aggression has also been established by Buss and Perry, (1992), who demonstrate that aggression depends on physiological arousal that also represents the emotional component of behavior. They further argue that hostility, which is comprised of feelings of ill will, represents the cognitive component of behavior (Buss & Perry, 1992, p. 457). However, the emergence of aggression seems to have different manifestations for both genders. Contrary to common belief, in a British sample, mothers reported their daughters to be more aggressive in early years of development than boys, (Hay et al 2007). This assumption creates the possibility of a broader spectrum to understand the underlying cause of aggression because in the case of females it is more likely to subside gradually.

## **HYPOTHESES**

The present research formulated three hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and aggression of undergraduate student;
2. There is no significant difference between emotional intelligence of males and female undergraduate students; and
3. There is no significant difference between the aggression of male and female undergraduate students.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants**

Seventy five male and seventy five female undergraduate volunteered to be the participants of the study from three different colleges of Karachi. Informed consent was obtained by using consent form that acquired demographical data like age, educational level, and gender. The age of the participant was between 18-24(Mean age 21, SD).

### **Instruments of the Study**

- I. Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale, (2002) WLEIS

WLEIS is a “self-report” scale used for measuring intelligence and has been developed by Wong and Law. WLEIS is a comparatively short scale but suffices the need to measure all dimensions of EI and according to Wong and Law. There are 16 items that explain four sub-scales based on factor analysis by Wong and Law (2002) of “self-emotion appraisal (SEA)”, “others’ emotion appraisal” (OEA), “and use of emotions” (UOE) and “regulation of emotions” (ROE).

**II. Buss and Perry, Aggression Questionnaire, (1992)BPAQ**

Among the most popular measures of aggression is the 29-item, self-report Aggression Questionnaire (AQ; Buss & Perry, 2001). Structural analyses of the AQ have revealed four underlying factors: Physical Aggression (PA), Verbal Aggression (VA), Anger (A), and Hostility (H). Participants had to complete each item with one of the available options that best describe his/her perception about his/her life

**Procedure**

Respondents have to respond on a 4-point scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree” for both the questionnaire. Information gained through two questionnaires was assessed in terms of frequencies and percentages. To test all hypotheses of the present study, Pearson product-moment Correlation, independent t-test was computed using SPSS, Version, 20. The degree of Cornbach’s Alpha reliability of WLEIS and BPAQ was .789 and .771 respectively.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

First of all, group statistics were obtained for finding out the difference between males and females in relation to mean, and standard deviation.

1. There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and aggression of undergraduate student.

**Table 1. Relationship between Emotional Intelligence with Aggression**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Pearson (r)</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Aggression	-0.212*	.005

Table 1 shows the result of Pearson’s product moment coefficient of correlation ‘r’ and relationship between EI and aggression was significant (r= - 0.212\*, p .005).

2. There is no significant difference between emotional intelligence of males and female undergraduate students.

**Table 2. Difference between males and females in relation to EI**

<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Emotional	Male	75	35.53	3.198	-9.487
Intelligence	Female	75	40.39	3.066	.000

Table 2 shows the difference between Mean, Standard Deviation and t test indicates that there is a considerable difference between the EI of male and female undergraduate students.

**Table 3. Comparison between Male and Female Students’ on ‘subcomponents’ of EI**

<i>Male n= 75; Female n=75</i>						
<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	
SEA	8.87	1.655	9.72	1.790	-3.031	.003
OEA	8.80	1.627	10.87	1.941	-6.383	.000
UOE	9.83	2.114	9.95	2.199	-.341	NS
ROE	8.04	1.520	10.05	1.731	-7.569	.000

Table 3 demonstrates that the difference is significant for the Subcomponent SEA, OEA and ROE also.

- There is no significant difference between the aggression of male and female undergraduate students.

**Table 4. Difference between Male and Female Students’ Aggression Levels**

<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Emotional	Male	75	76.75	8.870	5.093
Intelligence	Female	75	70.09	7.022	.000

Table 4 shows that there was a significant relationship ( $t = 5.093, df 148, p < 0.000$ ).

**Table 5. Comparison between Male and Female Students’ on ‘subcomponents’ of Aggression**

<i>Male n= 75; Female n=75</i>						
<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	
PA	23.83	3.786	20.20	3.205	-6.332	.000
VA	13.93	1.989	12.67	2.315	3.594	.000
A	18.61	3.328	17.08	2.437	3.219	.002
H	20.37	3.352	20.15	2.981	.438	NS

Table 5 presents that the test of PA, VA and A are found to be significant to examine the difference between the two genders.

## DISCUSSIONS

From the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that emotional intelligence is a type of intelligence that includes i) self-emotion appraisal, ii) others’ emotion appraisal, iii) use of emotions, and iv) regulation of emotions. Thus one must develop EI to handle aggression more appropriately especially educational institutions. The most significant factor in the present study was regarded as gender and its influence has been examined to establish the correlation between the two variables. The current study uses Pearson product moment

correlation, independent sample t tests to find out gender differences for the levels of EI and Aggression. The results are significant for both of these variables as well as for their components. The current research, however, could not present statistically significant result for one subcomponent of Aggression (H) and one subcomponent of EI (UOE).

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study primarily intends to establish a link between aggression and emotional intelligence. The elicited may require a longitudinal research for more valid result. Due to the limited scope of the research situational analysis was not made and the current research had to rely only on self-report measures (questionnaires) which serve as forced choice options. During the course of the study several behaviors of individuals were observed that could have offered very productive. For example environmental settings at home in nurturing these students may have been studied at length but was beyond the scope of the current research. Miller and Eisenberg, (1998), proposed that a lack of empathy encourages antisocial or aggressive behavior; as such actions might be facilitated in those who fail to appreciate the feelings of others.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The present research supports the concept of linking EI and Aggression and has been helpful in establishing an inverse correlation between the two measures. However, if reduced element of aggression in females can be studied in further research it can shed more light on this construct. Several suggestions can be made for future research. Similarly several other aspects like family background and single parent families and the level of parental education can have significant effect on EI and aggression. Furthermore, For example, it will be important to know whether EI correlates and aggression correlate in elementary, middle, and high school students with different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Only future research will help answer these questions.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The significance of emotions in educational institutions has come to be recognized in the literature and the current study attempted to present their implications for students, teachers, educators and psychologists. Palmer et al, (2002), found that higher emotional intelligence was a predictor of life satisfaction and thus lesser incidence of aggression. Future research also will need to examine whether EI skills can be taught. Zeidner, Roberts and Matthews, (2002), urge educators to employ emotional literacy programs. In order to validate emotional literacy programs for students researchers at Yale University are testing their effectiveness, (Maurer & Brackett, 2004). Preliminary evaluations can be made with the help of students, teachers, and parents to assess the practicality of such programs. This curriculum can be designed to teach children about the emotion-related abilities described in Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale, (2002). Teachers have to be trained to know and adopt methods which nurtures emotional intelligence- friendly school environment. Based on the findings, it is recommended that emotional literacy should be taught, facilitated and assessed as a separate course, in the education system.

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