The Relationship Between Gender and Emotional Intelligence

Fataneh Naghavi, Marof Redzuan
Faculty of Human Ecology, University Putra Malaysia Serdang 43400, Malaysia

Abstract: The article reviews empirical studies which emphasized on the relation between gender and emotional intelligence. Emotional quotient (EQ) is a set of abilities such as conception, emotion appraisal and expression, emotion management and regulation and emotion utilization of emotion. As emotional intelligence is acquisitive and of social origin, parents and children thus expose their emotions in an expressive way to one another, either consciously or unconsciously in their interactions. It seems that further to individual differences of boy and girl, the expectations of society and people around, especially parents, are different in terms of children’s sexuality. Culturally, girls are mostly expected to be more expressive of feelings, whereas abstaining from feelings expression in boys is strengthened as a manly model. The research showed that emotional intelligence is meaningful associated with gender differences. The article is divided into several sections. The review is started with the definition of emotional intelligence and this is followed by a review on the emotional intelligence, as well as the effects and interaction of gender differences. Then, an overview of the paper is included a demonstration of the influence of gender differences on emotional intelligence is also given. Finally, as conclusion it is important to realize that girls are higher than boys in emotional intelligence, but high emotional intelligence in boys is a better predictor for achievement.

Key words: Emotional intelligence • Emotional quotient • Gender • Early adolescence

INTRODUCTION

Recognition and emotion have always been focused on in philosophy and later in psychological research. One century before the Christ, Pablilius stated: “rule over your feelings and do not let your feelings rule over you”. For a very long period of time, emotions were regarded as non-logical modes which were imperfect and confused. Some research even indicates that emotion release is not valuable without recognition processing. Similarly, mental ruminating as to negative emotions causes depression to increase. However, is uncontrolled emotion release and ruminating the only ways of using emotions [1].

Today, absolute recognition focus in man’s psychological studies has been replaced by emotion and recognition influence and role in his/her psychical health and development [1]. Emotional Recognizing emotions and feelings is a basis and radical for emotional intelligence [5]. intelligence is conceptualized to incorporate recognition and emotion or intellectual emotion. Although psychological systems have negatively looked into emotions, the attention given to emotions and feelings can be regarded.

The core and basis of psychology and one can therefore look for mental disturbances roots in emotional perturbations like fear, anxiety, depression and alexithymia [2].

Freud [3] used free association and dream interpretation in his treatments and helped patients restate their thoughts and desires by providing an ambience free of the judgment and appraisal of wisdom.

This insight towards behavior is not only intellectual, but also a correcting emotional experience. This new experience is both the change center and the main factor of psychotherapy. The aim of psychoanalysis is emotional reconciliation and insight creation; insight is a method to acquire emotional reconciliation. In the course of psychoanalysis, primary emphasis is on the clarification of emotions and feelings. Similarly, Parker [4] also emphasizes consciousness in psychoanalysis. Gestalt-therapy techniques are defined by two behavioral axes, namely “rules” and “designs.” In particular, rules are effective instruments to integrate the thought and feeling of references, while designs are activities carried out by references to recognize different poles of their personality and dealing with facts [5].
Among the pioneers of family treatment, Virginia Stair was one who had placed the highest emphasis on feelings in the family. In the same vein, she paid attention on the family’s daily work and emotional experiences. At the same time, she also persuaded family members to describe their feelings and notice both facial and non-verbal states of one another [6].

Considering the above information, it seems that one of the aims of psychology, consultation and psychoanalysis is the development of patients’ emotional intelligence. Considering the orientation of the recent studies in the identification and role of emotional intelligence, as a concept different from personality and emotional quotient (EQ), a clear and comprehensive recognition of this structure is therefore achieved when the family's role in development and its relation with emotional intelligence is specified.

Unnless a society contains sound families, it cannot be claimed as healthy. On the other hand, family is a consequent or reflection of the whole society and its significant roles are obviously to transfer values and cultural and credence heritage by word-of-mouth, while maintaining kinship relations, raising and training generations, supplying basic human needs, as well as creating emotional and psychic balance among the members [7]. Nonetheless, the internal procedures of the people are not entirely internal; they are rather influenced by external factors which mutually affect each other.

The family has the highest effect on the individuals and it can mould their behaviors at any moment. A behavior which is created in relation to other family members is not limited to a normal agreeable behavior. The family can form abnormal behaviors, too [8].

The role of a family’s’ performance in shaping an individual’s behaviors, personality and development of his different talents is important. Researchers studying behavioral sciences call a suitable environment an orchard and an unsuitable environment, a cemetery of talents. Do children whose parents provide suitable environments for them have higher emotional intelligence? Do children whose parents show their emotions to each other and to their kids improperly not understand each other, or the opposite side’s emotions, behave in the same way?

In general, children’s situation in a family (e.g. their gender and number, birth order, relation with their age group or other relatives) and cultural and economic factors influence the formation of their personality [9].

In addition, the treatment by parents to their children and how they react to their interests and activities, as well as kids’ treatment to one another, emotion and information exchange among them, emotional protection to one another and the relationships of the family members’ with outsiders may also influence the children’s emotional intelligence. This paper is a literature review of several past research conducted on the role of family functioning in emotional intelligence.

In the other hand, gender differences in emotion regulation, although small on average, have been reported. Compared to boys, girls use more emotion regulation strategies [10, 11], express their emotions more often [12] and experience their emotions more intensely [13, 14].

**WHAT IS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?**

Emotion is resulted from interaction between physiological stimulation and appraisal of situation identification. When there is physiological stimulation, it is the stimuli, conditions and signs surrounding the individual that specify which emotional state he/she will experience. Emotions are functional and social and emotional experiences inside us to others through creating distinctive facial and body states [15]. Mayer and Salovey [16] indicate that emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive precisely, appraise and express emotions of one’s own and others’ access and generate feelings when they facilitate thinking, as well as regulate and utilize emotions in problem solving [17].

The history of research on intelligence has made it clear that the reason for people’s success in their personal and occupational life is not merely EQ. Years before that, Thordike [18] presented a model of intelligence which included not only the factors of traditional intelligence, but also the factor that he called as ‘social intelligence’. He defined it as the ability to understand and management of wise action and behaviour in human relations. Thordike’s definition of social intelligence was a behavioral and cognitive ability and it implied that firstly, man’s conception and management abilities are intellectual abilities and secondly, such abilities are distinct from the classic, abstract and mechanical-objective aspects of intelligence. Since then, much attention has been paid on the concept of social intelligence. For years, the principal question has been that whether an empirically unique and solid limit for social intelligence can be specified and whether it is only a function of a more general abstract intelligence. A lot of studies have been carried out to separate educational-scientific intelligence from social intelligence, but only a little progress has been made [19, 20]. According to Ford
and Tisak [20] most of such studies were not successful due to two reasons; first, defining social intelligence is difficult a different task and different researchers have presented different definitions, whereas other definitions consider it a multi-dimensional structure. The second problem lies in the method to be used to measure social intelligence so that it is justifiable from psychometric point of view.

Considering such problems in relation to the concept of social intelligence, analyses tended to use other conceptualization and non-intellectual factors measurement methods. Another option was the concept of emotional intelligence which was introduced by Mayer and Salovey [21] and later developed by Goleman [22]. This concept originated from Waksler’s general non-intellective factors thought (1940, 1942). Later, Leeper [23] applied this concept and assumed that emotional thoughts were a part of logical intelligence and played a role in logical and general intelligence. For about forty years, nothing else was done regarding emotional intelligence until Gardner [24] introduced his Multiple Intelligence theory, which incorporating the cognitive aspects of intelligence. Both the cognitive and emotional aspects of intelligence are incorporated in Gardner’s theory. This theory includes seven independent kinds of intelligence; one is personal intelligence that is divided into intrapersonal intelligence – knowledge of one’s internal feelings and events and interpersonal intelligence - the ability to specify others’ reactions, needs, emotions and purposes [25].

Emotional intelligence is a form of social intelligence [21] and a suitable predictor of general functioning and particular areas such as occupational performance [26, 27], including one’s ability to manage his/her and others’ feelings and emotions, distinguish between them and use such information to direct one’s thinking and practice [21]. Moreover, emotional intelligence, also, has the scientific features of a rational intelligence [28] as elaborated:

- Conceptual criterion: emotional intelligence reflects mental functioning, not the salient methods of behaving or sagacity-free skills, or self-respect only. In other words, it measures abilities related to emotion [29, 21].
- Correlation criterion: emotional intelligence includes a set of abilities which are dependant and related to other mental skills, described by other kinds of proved intelligence [29, 21].
- Developmental criterion: emotional intelligence develops along with age and experience from childhood to adulthood [30, 31]. Considering the evolitional aspects of emotional intelligence, three mental abilities of adolescents are significant; namely (a) conception, appraisal and expression of emotion, (i.e. the ability to identify and understand one’s and others’ emotions based on situational and expressional cues, emotional meanings of which are in accordance with culture); (b) emotions regulation and management and one’s ability to compatibly dealing with opposite or negative emotions using self-regulation methods that improve the extent or duration of such emotions, the ability to create joyful conditions for others, as well as concealing one’s negative emotions to avoid harming others’ personal feelings [32], (c) emotion utilization, i.e. the ability to plan flexibly and use emotions in problem-solving [21].

GENDER AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

A 20-year research on interactions between emotion and cognition has created a basis for the recent works on emotional intelligence. The concept of emotional intelligence, which was first introduced by Salovey and Mayer [21], is a strong basis to study individual differences, particularly on how reasoning is done by feelings and about feelings. A recently developed orientation has shifted its focus from emotional intelligence concept as a property or trait [30, 33] to conceptualization of capabilities in emotional intelligence [34, 35].

According to this orientation, emotional intelligence is one’s ability to comprehend, express, understand, apply and manage emotions in oneself and others. Considering the developmental aspects of emotional intelligence, three features of mental capabilities in adolescents take special importance; these are (1) comprehension, appraisal and emotion expression, (2) emotion regulation and management, (3) emotion utilization [32]. Children learn to express, comprehend, understand and regulate emotions by exchanging their emotions with parents and coevals. Some of them take control of their own and others’ emotions more skillfully due to big differences in individual abilities and their social world. On the other hand, some children lack adequate skills to interpret emotions for achievement in the social world [36].
In all cultures, family is the center of the formation of individual’s identity. As indicated by Minuchin [37], the basis of human’s identity comprises two foundations; the feeling of ‘belongingness’ and the feeling of ‘distinction’ or to be separated. Children’s externalization with the family is the source that creates belongingness. Everybody is a part of a family and carries his/her name, culture and properties. Meanwhile, everyone has the feeling of being distinct from others. This feeling is created by participating in different sub-sets (systems) of the family and connecting to the outside world. Therefore, nobody may be defined separately from their family which is the constituting factor of their personality.

Numerous studies have shown that parents’ interaction with their children, stringent discipline, unanimity, carelessness, or sincerity have deep and continuous consequences in their emotional life and provide the ground for their achievement or failure in different fields of life. Meanwhile, more recent findings indicate that appropriate emotional raise of children is an important factor which affects their future achievements in different fields [27]. Emotional intelligence enables an individual to correctly exhibit suitable amount of different emotions such as rage, fear, love, happiness, etc. in his/her behavior proportional to the situations and time. Moreover, it enables them to know about others’ emotions and react accordingly [27, 34].

Adolescence is a sensitive period of one’s life when he/she begins investigating their surroundings and seeks to establish relationship with. Adolescents’ relations with their parents become deranged and they should take some distance from sisters and brothers sub-system and find responsibilities and independence proportional to their age. Thus, parental sub-system relationship with them should change from parents-child to parents-young adult mode [37]. An important task during growth for children and adolescents is therefore to learn expression or instrument, recognize and comprehend emotional states accurately. This is particularly because they benefit from emotional knowledge as a guide in the social world [36].

In adolescence period, feelings and emotions conduct individuals in the course of life, so the adolescent’s attention and tendency to things outside of home and conflicts between them and their parents in this period provide the ground for the influences inflicted by social damages. If the family fulfils its roles and tasks correctly and enjoys required efficiency, it can protect its members against external damages. On the contrary, emotional intelligence can help adolescents to identify emotions and shocks so that they can correctly appraise, understand, express and use emotions in their thinking and practice. Therefore, emotional intelligence is a protecting factor against social damages and based on relevant research, it is also associated with successful marriage, life satisfaction, as well as job and academic achievements [27, 21].

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Kafetsios [5] studied hypotheses about the relation between attachment orientation and emotional intelligence in a research titled “Attachment and emotional intelligence power during lifetime”. The statistical universe included 239 mature people between 19 to 66 years old who completed Mayer, Salovey, Caruso’s Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT V2) and filled out the relations questionnaire. The findings indicated that secure attachment had correlation with all subscales (except for emotion conception) and the overall score of emotional intelligence. Contrary to what was expected, rejecting attachment had a positive relation with the ability of emotion conception. Also, the results of emotional intelligence abilities between different sexual and age groups showed a meaningful difference. Elder participants got higher score of the emotional intelligence fork (facilitation, conception, management) and females got higher scores of emotion conception and aberration than males.

Brudy and Hall [39] say, in their study titled “Sexuality and emotion”, that boys and girls learn different lessons in controlling their emotions. Parents mostly talk to their daughters, rather than sons, about emotions (except for anger). Compared to sons, parents give more information about feelings to their daughters. Since girls get mastery over language faster than boys this causes them to be more experienced in precisely expressing their feelings and more skillful in using words to name emotional reactions and replace words for physical reactions than boys. Boys, for whom emotions expression has not been emphasized, are probably unaware of their and others’ emotional states to a large extent [36].
Karniz and Karniz [37] said that in the age of 10 the percentage of girls who show open aggression, like boys, when they are angry is almost equal. But in the age of 13 there is a meaningful difference between the two sexes. Compared with boys, girls get more skill in artistic aggressive techniques such as collective banning, revengeful gossiping and indirect avenging [37].

Bracket, Mayer, Warner [21] studied emotional intelligence and its relation with daily behaviors. Criterion admissibility and emotional intelligence increase and segregation scale were assessed in this study. 330 students were selected for the emotional intelligence ability test, the five-factor personality scale and Life Space scales which assess self-care behavior, educational activities, spare time and interpersonal communications on an arrayed basis. The findings showed that females got meaningfully higher scores than males in emotional intelligence, but emotional intelligence is a more distinguished predictor in men’s life.

Men’s lower score of emotional intelligence (principally), inability to understand emotions and using them to facilitate thinking are associated with negative consequences such as taking alcoholic and illegal drugs, deviated behavior and weakness in relation with friends. In this specimen, emotional intelligence had a meaningful relation with male students’ inadaptable and negative behaviours, but no such relation was found for females.

In a study by Mayer and his colleagues [28] determination of psychic-kinetic features of emotional intelligence structure have been focused. Their factor analysis of MEIS indicated overall emotional intelligence and conception factors, cognition and conception and emotion management factor. Their specimens were 503 people mostly young females. With an average deviation of 0.5, females had better performance than males [18].

Siaruchi and his colleagues [23] selected 73 boys and 58 girls of 13 to 15 age group to whom Schuttle’s Emotional Intelligence Scale was given and they reported proper validity results. In this study, emotional intelligence had overlapping with self-respect and hidden anxiety. The girls were meaningfully higher than the boys in overall emotional intelligence, emotion understanding skill, emotion regulation and emotion utilization at P<0.05 level.

Khosrow Javid [11] reported, in a research to study the validity and admissibility of Schuttle’s Emotional Intelligence Scale structure in adolescents, that this scale has high structure validity and admissibility in adolescents’ society. Factor analysis and factors internal correlation methods were used together to assess the admissibility of the scale structure. The results of factor analysis by using main constituents analyzing method suggested three factors: emotion regulation, emotion appraisal and expression and emotion utilization. Also, the girls had higher scores than the boys in overall emotional intelligence (P<0.05) and emotion appraisal (P<0.001), but with regard to emotion regulation and utilization factors, the difference was not meaningful. Although Goleman (1995) considered males and females to have their own personal profiles of strengths and weaknesses for emotional intelligence capacities, studies conducted by Mayer, Caruso and Salovey in 1999 and Mayer and Geher in 1996 indicate that women score higher on measures of emotional intelligence than men.

CONCLUSION

Based on the literature review, it can therefore be concluded that emotional intelligence has been put forward for about two decades and many related studies have been carried out to study it. It is understood from the previous studies that emotional intelligence is associated with factors such as life satisfaction, adaptability, optimism, overall intelligence, personality and emotional disorders like alexithymia, depression and anxiety, birth order, gender and family size. Previous studies have also shown that girls are higher than boys in their emotional intelligence, but high emotional intelligence in boys is a better predictor for achievement. Research orientation has mostly been done toward clarifying and expanding the concept of emotional intelligence. From what has been mentioned above we can conclude the following. Gender differences in EI can be glimpsed from infancy due to the differential teaching given to boys and girls. According to these studies further to individual differences of boy and girl, the expectations of society and people around, especially parents, are different in terms of children’s sexuality. Culturally, girls are mostly expected to be more expressive of feelings, whereas abstaining from feelings expression in boys is strengthened as a manly model. Thus, it is more widely believed that women have higher EI than men but, although these findings seem to contradict this, it could perhaps be an indication that more research into EI and reaction time within gender to be carried out to further this discovery.
REFERENCES


