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Relationship between Demographic Factors and Emotional Intelligence: An Empirical Evidence from Pakistan

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Abstract:

Emotional intelligence (EI) is usually distinct as the ability to know one's own feelings, overseeing it and ideally have the capacity to comprehend other individuals' feelings too. The purpose for this exploration is to determine the level of emotional intelligence of Pakistani students and examine the impact of demographic factors (gender, age, location, family size, Parents income, Father's education, Mother's Education) on their emotional intelligence. 200 participants of two public universities of Southern Punjab, Pakistan have been selected. The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I 2.0) has been used to assess the level of emotional intelligence of students. Moreover, the students' demographic survey (SDS) has been used for collecting demographics' information of students. Descriptive statistics and PLS-SEM have been applied for analysis of the data. Results indicate that gender, age, location and parents' income and education have positive impact on EI of students, and however, family size has negative impact on EI of students.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence (EI), Demographic Factors (DF), PLS-SEM, EQ-I 2.0.

1. Introduction

In recent years, emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as one of the vital elements of success and interpersonal relations in everyday life (Fernandez-Berrocal and Ruiz, 2008). This construct has been defined as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Todres, Tsimtsiou, Stephenson and Jones, 2010; Lewis, Rees, Hudson & Bleakley, 2005). Accordingly, not only are people with high EI aware of their own emotions, but they are also able to have a good understanding of others' emotions and use this ability to manage and adjust their behaviour when communicating with others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). In the past, many empirical researches have examined the relationship of emotional intelligence with many psycho-social issues and found the importance of emotional intelligence and its helpful features in the area of social relationships, health psychology, handling job-related stress, academic turf and increasing performance. Relationships between demographic factors (DF) like age, sex, family socio economic status and emotional intelligence (EI) have been discussed widely in the previous studies. Studies have proposed to research into the influence of demographic variables on emotional intelligence of individuals. Therefore, this study focuses on the impact of demographic factors on EI of students. The reason to conduct this study is the varied and conflicting results of the previous studies to represent gap for this study.

For example, Salovey and Mayer (1990) had demonstrated that the EI developed with increasing age and experience. Goleman (1996) had also specified that emotional intelligence increased with the age and it could be learned, refined and amplified in adulthood. Age brings about more social and emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 2012). According to Boyatzis, Goleman, and Rhee, (2000), people can modify their EI skills over two to five years. In the same way, Kafetsios (2004) found that older people had higher score on EI scale when he investigated the emotional intelligence in 239 adults of age 19 years to 66 years. It is argued that emotional development is related to the physical maturity and the older children exhibit more emotional capability than the younger children (Parker et al., 2005; Bryant and Malone, 2015; Chapman and Hayslip, 2006; Bar-On, 2007; Kumar and Muniandy, 2012). On the other hand, some studies reported that there were no significant differences in the overall level of EI of respondents based on age (Sharma, 2016; Nasir and Masrur, 2010).

Similarly, there are number of studies conducted in the past to find out the effect of gender on emotional intelligence and demonstrate different results. Numerous studies clarified that emotional intelligence of female students was significantly higher than that of male students and female students are more enthusiastic and well aware of their emotions compare to male (Austin, Saklofske, & Egan, 2005; Brackett, Mayer & Warner, 2004; Chaudhry, Ali Jan, & Ali, 2013; Hyun, jeong, & kim, 2011). Moreover, some studies reported that to understand the emotions, females are more skilled than the males, and males show better management of emotions (Bindhu & Thomas 2006; Harrod & Scheer 2005). Similarly, Hunt and Evans (2004), and Mishra and Ranjan (2008) found that boys performed better than the girls on emotional intelligence.

In the same way, the past studies examined the impact of location or area of residence of students, where they were born and brought up, on emotional intelligence levels. Marzuki et al., (2012) reported that the students who live in city, their EI was higher than those who live in small town. However, Harrod and Scheer (2005) stated that there was not any significant relationship between emotional intelligence and place of residence.

Likewise, Ozabaci (2006) and Naghavi and Redzuan (2012) claimed that students living in smaller families show higher emotional intelligence than those of larger families. However, Shrestha, (2015) could not find any significant relationship between family size and emotional intelligence.

Similarly, Rauf et al. (2013) found a positive and significant relationship between parents' income and EI level of students. Meanwhile, Harrod and Scheer (2005) declared that students belonging to rich families performed better on EI scale which indicated that level of EI was affected by the family hardships. People with lower income are under pressure and stress and cannot concentrate and manage their emotions. However, Sharma and Vaid (2005) found that low-income families' children possess better emotional stability skills as compared to children belonging to middle-income families.

Moreover, Harrod and Scheer (2005) studied the relationship between EI score and the demographic characteristics of the students. The finding exposed that there is a positive relationship between levels of emotional intelligence and education levels of parents and household income. Mohanty and Devi, (2010) and Nasir and Iqbal (2012) described that a good education and occupation of parents positively and significantly affect the interpersonal relationship (EI) of the adolescents. Hence, it shows that educated parents have the capability of developing and sustaining the substantial relationship considered by emotional intimacy and understanding. Akber et al. (2011) results indicated that parent's education, area of residence, and SES affect EI of students positively.

Based on the above discussion and evidence from the literature in which some studies support the link between DF and EI and some studies show no relationship between demographic factors and emotional intelligence, this study finds the opportunity to reexamine this relationship by using second generation technique partial least square based structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) and develop a structural model to explain the relationship between demographic factors and EI.

2. Objective of Study

There are two main objectives of this study.

1. Determine the level of emotional intelligence of Southern Punjab university students.
2. Determine the impact of demographic factors on student's emotional intelligence.

3. Methodology

The respondents for this study were 200 students from Islamia University Bahawalpur and Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan. The random sampling technique was applied to select the sample. This is descriptive study and in this study, Student Demographics Survey (SDS) was used to retrieve background information of students. SDS includes the information on age, gender, parents' income, parents' education level, locality (urban/ rural) and family size. Emotional intelligence of the students was measured through Bar-On EQ-I 2.0 which was used with the permission of Multi Health System (MHS) Canada. Partial least square based structural equation modelling technique (PLS-SEM) was applied to analyze the relationships between the variables in this study. All the variables in this study are formative in nature.

3.1. Model Equations

There are three mathematical equations for this study. First equation shows the relationship between exogenous (independent) variables i.e. demographic factors and its formative indicators.

$$\xi = \gamma_{F.S} F.S + \gamma_{Gender} Gender + \gamma_{P.income} P.inc + \gamma_{Loc} Loc + \gamma_{F.Edu} F.Edu + \gamma_{M.Edu} M.Edu + \gamma_{Age} Age + \zeta$$

Where

ξ = Latent exogenous variable i.e. demographic factors (DF) γ = path co-efficient

ζ = random disturbance term

<i>F.S</i>	Number of children in one family including those who are studying
<i>Loc</i>	Residence of children in urban or rural area if urban assigns 1, if rural then 0
<i>F. Edu</i>	Qualification of father in terms of primary, secondary or college/university education
<i>M. Edu</i>	Qualification of mothers in terms of primary, secondary or college/university
<i>P.income</i>	Earnings of parents in Pakistan currency
<i>Gender</i>	If student is male then assign 0 and if student is female then assign 1
<i>Age</i>	Age of students in numbers

The second mathematical equation of endogenous variable i.e. emotional intelligence and its formative indicator is given below.

$$\eta = \gamma_{ST-EI} ST-EI + \zeta$$

Where

η = Latent endogenous variable i.e. emotional intelligence (EI) γ = path co-efficient

ζ = random disturbance term

ST-EI = stander score of students on EQ-I 2.0

The third equation represents the constructs and the path between them. The main objective of this study, impact of demographic factors (DF) on emotional intelligence is measured by:

$$\eta = \beta\xi + \zeta$$

Where

η = endogenous latent construct i.e. emotional intelligence (EI)

ξ = Latent exogenous variable i.e. demographic factors (DF)

ζ = random disturbance term

The SmartPLS version 3.2.2 is used to analyze the data for descriptive statistics, evaluation of measurement models and structural models.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows seven categories of demographic factors of students; Gender, Age, Loc., F.S, P.income, F.Edu, M.edu. The descriptive statistics revealed that raw EI score of students falls within the range of 217 to 512 and the average EI score is 357.5 which shows above average EI level of students. Female ratio is 67% of the total sample and mean age of students is 20.7. There were 61% of the total students living in the urban areas. The average family size of emerging adults is 4.30 i.e. 4 to 5 siblings which is considered medium size family in Pakistan. The average income of parents is about 65750Rs per month and fathers of students are more educated than their mothers.

Description	N	Min	Max	Mean	St. Deviation
EI	200	217	512	357.58	90.06
Gender	200	0	1	0.67	0.469
Age	200	18	25	20.7	1.646
Loc.	200	0	1	0.61	0.487
F.S	200	1	9	4.30	1.756
P.income	200	30000	120000	65750	21034
F.Edu	200	1	8	5.15	1.80
M.Edu	200	1	8	4.53	2.087

Table 1: Descriptive analysis

Note: EI= Emotional Intelligence, Loc. = location, F.S. = family size, P. income= Parents income, F.Edu= Father's education, M.Edu= Mother's Education.

4.2. Level of Emotional Intelligence

In order to know the level of EI of students, the researchers must use the standardized data values as suggested by the EQ-i 2.0 (Multi-Health Systems, Inc., 2012). According to MHS, a score of 70 to 90 is considered in the low range of emotional intelligence and shows an opportunity for personal development. A score of 91 to 110 is a mid-range score whereas any score above 110 designates a high score. Hence, following the guidelines of MHS, the data is standardized at mean of 100 and standard deviation of 15. After standardization of data, only 60 students have high EI level, 64 have an average EI level and 76 students have a low EI level. Therefore, 140 (70%) out of 200 students have average or below average EI in two universities of Southern Punjab.

4.3. PLS-SEM Analysis

4.3.1. Measurement Model Analysis

The formative measurement model involves two steps to report reliability and validity of constructs and indicators. The first step is to test the collinearity problem among indicators. The second step is to test the statistical significance of the outer weights with the help of boot strapping approach of SmartPLS (Hair et al., 2014). Table 2 describes the significance of outer weights and VIF values of DF construct and its formative indicators.

Construct	Indicators	Outer Weights	T-Values	P-Values	VIF
DF	Gender	0.132	2.27**	0.024	1.214
	Age	0.291	5.04***	0.000	2.529
	F.S	-0.166	2.82***	0.005	1.256
	P.income	0.310	4.97***	0.000	1.237
	Loc.	0.194	3.59***	0.000	1.163
	M.Edu	0.291	3.41***	0.001	2.524
	F.Edu	0.135	1.66*	0.097	1.531
EI	ST-EI	1.00	----	----	1.00

Table 2: VIF and Significance of outer weights

*significance at 10% (1.645), **significance at 5% (1.965), ***significance at 1% (2.575)

The above table shows that the demographic factors, Age, F. Edu, Gender, Loc., M. Edu, and P. income had significant contribution in making demographic construct and have positive impact on emotional intelligence. Only one indicator of family size (F.S) has a negative impact on students' emotional intelligence. Moreover, the family income is the main contributor towards emotional intelligence (path coefficient 0.310, t-value= 4.970, $p < 0.000$). Female student's emotional intelligence level is better than male students. Gender is significant at $\alpha = 0.01$ level (path coefficient 0.132, t-value= 2.27, $p < 0.001$). F-SIZ is negatively significant at $\alpha = 0.01$ level (path coefficient -0.166, t value= 2.825, $p < 0.008$). This means that large family size adversely affect the emotional intelligence of the students. The location is significant at $\alpha = 0.01$ level (path coefficient 0.196, t-value= 3.593, $p < 0.000$) which means that emotional intelligence level of urban students is better than rural students. Age is also significant at $\alpha = 0.01$ level (path coefficient 0.291, t-value= 5.040, $p < 0.000$). Father education (F. Edu.) is insignificant ($\alpha = 0.10$ level (path coefficient 0.135, t-value= 1.665, $p < 0.10$) and M.Edu is significant at $\alpha = 0.01$ level (path coefficient 0.291, t-value= 3.414, $p < 0.000$) which shows that educated mother's contribution to enhance emotional intelligence level of students is greater than that of father.

4.3.2. Structural Model Analysis

This involves examining the model's predictive capabilities and the relationships between the constructs. The important criteria for measuring the structural model in PLS-SEM are the significance of path coefficients, the level of R^2 , the f^2 effect size and predictive relevance Q^2 (Hair et al., 2014). The path coefficients, R^2 values can be seen from the structural model of DF and EI. In this analysis, the model has tested the impact of DF on EI. The structural model is shown in Figure 1 with the impact of demographic factors (DF) on emotional intelligence (EI).

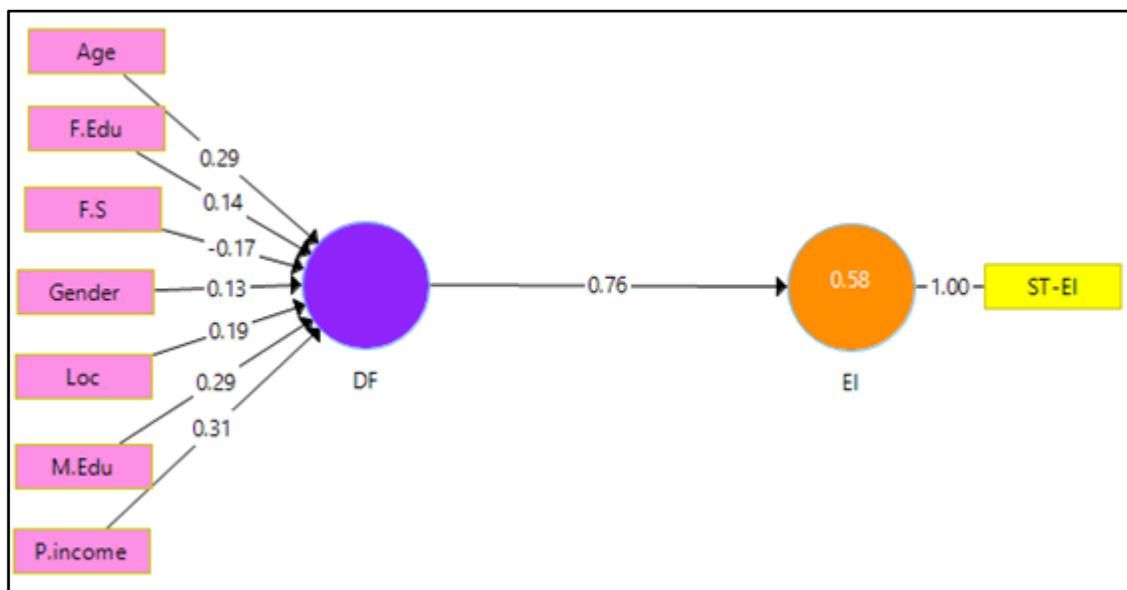


Figure 1: Structural model between DF and EI

In the above figure, The R^2 value is 0.583 which is above the large effect size value and this shows the promising explanatory power of this model. This means that 58.3% variation in students' EI can be explained by demographic factors. Adjusted R^2 is 0.582 which is equal to R^2 and demonstrates that all indicators of DF are relevant and suitable for demographic representation. In addition to R^2 value, the value of f^2 is 1.39 which represents large effect size. The predictive relevance of this model Q^2 is 0.619 which is significant as compared to the acceptable value of above than zero.

5. Discussion

This study was carried out to ascertain the effect of exogenous variable (demographic factors) on endogenous variable (emotional intelligence) of students by using the second generation technique PLS. The results of this study revealed that DF has a significant effect on the emotional intelligence. The results of this study support the findings and conclusion of various studies on this relationship. For example, according to the result of this study, parents' income has the significant positive relation with emotional intelligence and it is the main contributor to enhance the student emotional intelligence. This result is consistent with the (Abdollahpouret al., 2016; Harrod & Scheer, 2005; Katyal & Awasthi, 2006; Nazir & Khurshid, 2016). The reason is that a family can enjoy life satisfaction, status and healthy environment with the help of more financial resources and this may lead to the development of emotional skills.

In this study, the effect of age on emotional intelligence was found to be significant, age enhanced emotional intelligence. Older student's emotional intelligence level is significantly higher than that of younger students. This finding is in fact consistent with (Bryant & Malone, 2015; Chapman & Hayslip, 2006; Bar-On, 2007; Kumar & Muniandy, 2012) who reported that emotional intelligence develops with age.

In this study Parents' education is significantly correlated with emotional intelligence of students. These results are in agreement with the results of studies conducted by Harrod and Scheer (2005). However, the effect of mother's education is greater than that of father's education on students emotional intelligence score. Therefore, educated mothers are able to solve their children's problems in a better way, provide better supportive home environment and also help them to achieve emotional competency and confidence which enhance their emotional intelligence (Akber et al., 2011; Mohanty & Davi, 2010; Nasir & Iqbal, 2012). Educated parents provide better family environment to their children which enhance their emotional intelligence (Davis-Kean, 2005).

Similarly, the effect of gender on emotional intelligence is significant which has been confirmed by various studies (Austin et al., 2005; Brackett, Mayer & Warner, 2004; Chaudhry, Ali Jan, & Ali, 2013; Hyun, Jeong, & Kim, 2011). These studies revealed that female emotional intelligence is significantly higher than male students and female students are more optimistic and well aware of their feelings and dealing with their emotions compare to male. The results of this study further show that family size is negatively associated with students' emotional intelligence level. Ozabaci (2006) and Naghavi and Redzuan, (2012) also supported this result that students, who live in the family with smaller size, have higher emotional intelligence than those from bigger families.

Similarly, it is the finding of this study that EI of urban students is better than students from rural areas. Marzuki et al. (2012) and Gurnani and Saxena (2015) support this result that urban students perform better in their emotional skills than that of rural students because generally they have better facilities than students living in rural areas.

6. Conclusion

It can be concluded from the above discussion that emotional intelligence level of students in Southern Punjab Universities is average. Six demographic factors have significant positive relationship with the emotional intelligence and lead to the development of emotional competencies. Only one demographic factor, i.e. family size has significant negative relationship with emotional intelligence. Therefore, it can be an established fact that EI is a learning ability and the understandings and experiences of life help to enhance this ability. Parents have a vital role in emotional development of children and their education can help them to achieve this responsibility, successfully. Moreover, emotional development of students depends on satisfaction in life, encouraging social environment and prospects of social interactions. The size of the family should preferably be small so that parents may be able to provide good education, better living conditions and provide full attention to their children and make them emotionally stable and confident. Girls should be educated as educated girls will become educated mothers in the future and contribute towards better emotional competency of their children as documented in this study.

At the end, some recommendations are given to improve the emotional intelligence level of students in universities. Important skills training workshops to enhance emotional intelligence and manage stress, anger and communicational ability should be conducted in the universities. This will increase the capabilities of students to understand their own emotions and emotions of others. Likewise, in all career development and counselling activities, it should also be focused. In order to enhance the life adjustment skills, the interaction between parents and students must be improved.

7. References

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