

## **Emotional Intelligence: A Study on Academic Professionals**

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### **ABSTRACT**

As emotional intelligence competencies are seen as the key to personal and professional success, thus it becomes significant to study the relationship of experience and age of an individual on the level of emotional intelligence. This study aims at finding out the perception and the level of emotional intelligence in a person on the basis of his/her age group and gender. The study is exploratory in nature where quota sampling was used to collect data. This study attempts to study the level of emotional intelligence among faculty members of academic institutions (who are the institution's greatest asset), like Amity University, SRM University, Delhi University, Lucknow University, and Christ University. A 2x3 factorial design was prepared to compare emotional intelligence between age and gender of academic professionals. A self-designed questionnaire, prepared on Likert type scale was distributed among 200 academicians of India, out of which 165 were responded and eventually, 160 questionnaires were selected for analysis. Tools like item to total correlation, reliability, factor analysis, and Z-test were used to analyse the data. Various factors like proficiency, holistic wisdom, candidness, insight, sensibility, understanding situations, truth loving, being relaxed; matured, balanced, having optimism, sagaciousness, calmness and development were identified. Results of the Z-test shows that respondents

in different age groups differ in emotional intelligence except between age groups of 25-35 and above 55. Results further show that females have higher emotional intelligence than males.

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## INTRODUCTION

Academicians play a key role in disseminating knowledge in specific subjects and help students to grow build emotional intelligence in its fullest stature, develop suitable attitudes and unfold a personality, high in emotional intelligence. Education to be meaningful should not only aim at the physical and mental growth of the individual but also take into account the needs and the aspirations of developing societies. Emotions of teachers are vital in this regard. An academician not only instructs but also motivates students. Some teachers find teaching to be a stressful occupation; when compared to other occupations, teachers experience high levels of stress.

The concept of emotional intelligence has recently attracted a lot of interest from academicians all over the world (Bachman, Stein, Campbell, & Sitarenios, 2000). Emotional intelligence is considered to be important as it affects the academic achievement of students positively, not only during the years they are taught but also during the years to follow. Emotions are our responses to the world around us and they are created by the combination of thoughts, feelings and actions. Emotions, if properly used are an essential tool for a successful and fulfilling life. But if our emotions are out of control, it can be detrimental. In our day to day life, they affect our relations with people, our self-identity and our ability to complete a task. To be effective, the cognitive processes must be in control of emotions so that they work for rather than

against cognition, hence, the the importance of emotional intelligence.

The most important predictor of personal success and organisational performance is emotional intelligence (EI). EI is a dimension of human behaviours that can be significantly increased. An emotionally intelligent person accepts himself, acts with confidence, manages all emotions exceptionally well and makes wise and sensible decisions (Slaski & Cartwright, 2002). EI enables a person to establish meaningful relationships, which is manifested as perceptiveness and the ability to communicate empathy. Thus, an emotionally intelligent person is resilient and will thrive during times of adversity.

Cherniss (2000) considers the factors that influence the capacity of relationships to promote social and emotional learning. These factors include the level of emotional competence and psychological development that each person brings to the relationship and group memberships (especially race, ethnicity, and gender) bring to the societies. Also important are routine patterns of behavior that can facilitate learning through social interaction. Finally, two organisational factors can have a significant influence: formal human resource systems and leadership.

EI is a broad term used for our level of competence in our personal and interpersonal skills. In work environments research expresses mastery of these personal and interpersonal skills as the single most important factor of our performance success

(Krishnan & Choubey, 2014). It is also a crucial factor in how we believe, think and act. EI will determine how well you know and deal with yourself, how well you handle, how well you interact and handle others. EI includes a broad array of sub-skills including how we observe our own and others' feelings and emotions, how we differentiate and evaluate and how we use this knowledge to guide our thinking and actions. It includes assertiveness, impulse control, adaptability, motivation and optimism.

The importance of emotions to intellectual functioning was originally studied by researchers such as Thorndike (1920), Guilford (1967), and Gardner (1983). As such, contemporary theories propose that emotions play an important role in organising, motivating and directing human behaviours (Gardner, 1983; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). A trend is noticeable in that EI is becoming an important area of research in the educational and psychological spheres (Bajpai, 2013; El Hassan & El Sader, 2005; Locke, 2005; Tripathi, Chaturvedi, & Goel, 2016). The first and most promising description and theory of EI was conceptualised by Salovey and Mayer (1990).

According to them, EI involves the abilities to perceive, appraise, and express emotion; to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought, to understand emotion and emotional knowledge, and to regulate emotions to promote emotional

and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

Salovey and Mayer (1990) categorised five domains of emotional intelligence:

- **Self Awareness:** It includes observations and recognising feelings as they happen. It is the key stone of emotional intelligence. The ability to monitor what we are feeling moment to moment is crucial to psychological insights and self understanding. Being aware of our emotion helps us to make better decisions as inappropriate emotional responses cloud out judgment.
- **Managing Emotions:** It relates to handling feelings so that they are appropriate, realising what is behind a feeling, finding ways to handling fears and anxieties, anger and sadness. It is managing one's internal states, impulses and resources.
- **Motivating Oneself:** This involves channeling emotions in the service of a goal, emotional self control, delaying gratification and stifling impulses. It is our emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate us in reaching goals.
- **Empathy:** Empathy is a fundamental human skill. Empathy forges emotional connection and tends to bind people together even more deeply than shared beliefs and ideas. Empathy underlies many interpersonal aptitudes like teamwork, persuasion and leadership. Empathy is also sensitivity to others'

feelings and concerns, taking their perspective, and appreciating the differences in how people feel about things. It is the awareness of others' feelings, needs and concerns.

- **Handling Relationships:** It includes managing emotions in others, social competencies and social skills. It is adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others.

Nelson, Low and Nelson (2005) presented in their research paper the critical role of EI in the success of students and is the most important factor in personal achievement, school success, leadership, and satisfaction in living. They also describe EI as a set of specific skills and concepts that are measurable, learnable and once acquired, can be utilised for success, not only in academics but in other aspects of life. Social and emotional competencies are potential predictors of leadership (Ashforth & Humphrey 1995; Cooper & Sawaf, 1997).

Cooper (1997) researched the positive correlation between age and emotional intelligence. Goleman (1995, 1996, 1998) further supported this research through the study that emotional intelligence increases with age, because of the fact that in most cases, maturity develops with increase in age. Emotional intelligence appears to be a measure of maturity or stability, hence, positively related to age irrespective of one's thinking orientation.

Abraham (1999) showed that EI has a positive effect on organisational outcomes of work, group cohesion, organisational

commitment, employee performance and organisational citizenship behaviour. Studies propose that people with high levels of EI practise more career success. Research shows that well developed emotional intelligence distinguishes individual 'star performers' and plays an important role in determining which organisation will outperform the competitors.

Further, Panda and Singhal (2009) studied primary school teachers' work behaviour in relation to emotional intelligence. Results indicated that emotional intelligence has positive effect on primary school teachers' work behavior. So, emotional intelligence of primary school teachers is given priority in educational situations for development of quality teachers.

O'Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver, and Story (2011) studied the relation between emotional intelligence and job performance. The investigators classified emotional intelligence study into three streams: (i) ability-based models that use objective test items; (ii) self-report or peer-report measures based on the four branch models of emotional intelligence; and (iii) mixed models of emotional competencies. The three streams demonstrated correlations ranging from 0.24 to 0.30, with job performance. A model was also proposed by Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000) which became the base for further studies.

Abdolvahabi, Bagheri, Haghghi, and Karimi (2012) found a significant relationship between emotional awareness, empathy, and self-efficacy. The results of

variance analysis for regression research showed that self-efficacy was significant according to emotional intelligence components.

### Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study are as follows:

- To find out the factors underlying emotional intelligence of faculty members in the institute.
- To find out the association between the determinants of EI and demographic factors of the respondents.
- To find out the difference in emotional intelligence among various age groups.
- To find out the difference in emotional intelligence based on gender.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Sample

The study was conducted in different educational institutes like Amity University Noida, SRM University Sonapat, Delhi University, and Christ University Bangalore. For this purpose, 200 academic professionals were contacted – some personally and few through mails and were requested to fill in a questionnaire comprising measure of emotional intelligence. The 40-item questionnaire was on a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated strongly disagree and 7 indicated strongly agree.

### Data Analysis

Reliability testing was applied to the items. Underlined factors were found through

factor analysis. Z-test was conducted to compare emotional intelligence of academic professionals. Hypotheses were formed for applying the Z-test between age groups:

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference between EI of academicians between the age groups of 25-35 and 40-55.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference between EI of academicians between the age groups of 40-50 and 55 and above.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference between EI of academicians between the age groups of 25-35 and 55 and above.

The following hypothesis was formed for applying Z-test between genders:

**Ho<sub>4</sub>:** There is no significant difference between gender and the EI of academic professionals.

Academic professionals were again compared on the basis of presence of different factors. Z-test was applied to compare these factors. Following hypotheses were formed:

**Ho<sub>5</sub>:** Male and female academicians have no significant difference on the basis of ‘proficient’ factor..

**Ho<sub>6</sub>:** Male and female academicians have no significant difference on the basis of ‘holistic wisdom’ factor. .

**Ho<sub>7</sub>:** Male and female academicians have no significant difference on the basis of ‘candid’ factor.

- Ho<sub>8</sub>:** Male and female academicians have no significant difference on the basis of ‘insightful’ factor. ’.
- Ho<sub>9</sub>:** Male and female academicians have no significant difference on the basis of ‘sensible’ factor.
- Ho<sub>10</sub>:** Male and female academicians have no significant difference on the basis of ‘understanding situations’ factor.
- Ho<sub>11</sub>:** Male and female academicians have no significant difference on the basis of ‘truth loving’ factor. .
- Ho<sub>12</sub>:** Male and female academicians have no significant difference on the basis of ‘relaxed’ factor.
- Ho<sub>13</sub>:** Male and female academicians have no significant difference on the basis of ‘mature’ factor.
- Ho<sub>14</sub>:** Male and female academicians have no significant difference on the basis of ‘balanced’ factor.
- Ho<sub>15</sub>:** Male and female academicians have no significant difference on the basis of ‘optimism’ factor.
- Ho<sub>16</sub>:** Male and female academicians have no significant difference on the basis of ‘sagacious’ factor.
- Ho<sub>17</sub>:** Male and female academicians have no significant difference on the basis of ‘calm’ factor. .
- Ho<sub>18</sub>:** Male and female academicians have no significant difference on the basis of ‘development’ factor.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Consistency Measure

Firstly, consistency of all the items in the questionnaire was checked through item to total correlation. Correlation of every item with the total was measured and the computed value was compared with standard value, that is, 0.14. If the computed value was found less than the standard value, then the whole factor / statement was dropped and termed as inconsistent. Only one item having value of 0.03412 was dropped (Table 1).

Table 1  
Item to total correlation

Items	Computed Correlation Value	Consistency	Accepted/ Dropped
1. <i>I stay relaxed and composed under pressure.</i>	0.189896	Consistent	Accepted
2. <i>I can identify negative feelings.</i>	0.292770	Consistent	Accepted
3. <i>I put negative feelings out of the mind.</i>	0.251526	Consistent	Accepted
4. <i>I am sensitive to other people's emotions and moods.</i>	0.334131	Consistent	Accepted
5. <i>I receive feedback and criticism without being defensive.</i>	0.03412	Inconsistent	Dropped
6. <i>I calm myself quickly when I get angry or upset.</i>	0.298696	Consistent	Accepted

Table 1 (continue)

7.	<i>I freely admit to making mistakes.</i>	0.310848	Consistent	Accepted
8.	<i>I communicate my needs and feelings honestly.</i>	0.295624	Consistent	Accepted
9.	<i>I pull myself back easily after setback.</i>	0.307532	Consistent	Accepted
10.	<i>I am aware of how my behaviour impacts others.</i>	0.428632	Consistent	Accepted
11.	<i>I pay attention and listen without</i>	0.470371	Consistent	Accepted
12.	<i>I always tell the truth.</i>	0.201303	Consistent	Accepted
13.	<i>I maintain good eye contact.</i>	0.200673	Consistent	Accepted
14.	<i>I understand how people experience conflicting emotions.</i>	0.421023	Consistent	Accepted
15.	<i>I know how to manage myself under pressure.</i>	0.441437	Consistent	Accepted
16.	<i>I remain keen to find new challenges.</i>	0.467092	Consistent	Accepted
17.	<i>I can stay cheerful even when things go wrong.</i>	0.380904	Consistent	Accepted
18.	<i>I understand my developmental needs.</i>	0.514569	Consistent	Accepted
19.	<i>I show passion and commitment towards others.</i>	0.501104	Consistent	Accepted
20.	<i>I know how to cope with stress.</i>	0.494955	Consistent	Accepted
21.	<i>I can sense emotions of people around me.</i>	0.594989	Consistent	Accepted
22.	<i>I can use my instincts and feelings.</i>	0.464019	Consistent	Accepted
23.	<i>I stay focused on getting a job done.</i>	0.378609	Consistent	Accepted
24.	<i>I am reliable and genuine.</i>	0.578538	Consistent	Accepted
25.	<i>I adapt to change.</i>	0.348298	Consistent	Accepted
26.	<i>I learn from my mistakes.</i>	0.50289	Consistent	Accepted
27.	<i>I try to be sensitive and understanding.</i>	0.357061	Consistent	Accepted
28.	<i>I take criticism positively.</i>	0.345998	Consistent	Accepted
29.	<i>I maintain work and life balance.</i>	0.393176	Consistent	Accepted
30.	<i>I remain patient with people.</i>	0.511356	Consistent	Accepted
31.	<i>I respond to people's emotions.</i>	0.376078	Consistent	Accepted
32.	<i>I use different moods to enhance my thinking.</i>	0.454134	Consistent	Accepted
33.	<i>I understand how emotions lead to anger.</i>	0.518116	Consistent	Accepted
34.	<i>I can tell when a friend is embarrassed.</i>	0.343896	Consistent	Accepted
35.	<i>I can tell when a friend is happy.</i>	0.399301	Consistent	Accepted
36.	<i>I can usually de-escalate anger and conflict.</i>	0.334742	Consistent	Accepted
37.	<i>I know how emotions progress and develop.</i>	0.386314	Consistent	Accepted
38.	<i>I laugh when people around me are laughing.</i>	0.337612	Consistent	Accepted
39.	<i>People rarely consult me about their personal problems.</i>	0.240854	Consistent	Accepted
40.	<i>I rarely lose myself in thoughts.</i>	0.288867	Consistent	Accepted

### Reliability Measure

Reliability test was carried out by using SPSS software. The reliability value through Cronbach's alpha method was 0.842 for 39

items. As the reliability value is good, the questionnaire can be considered to be highly reliable.

## Factor Analysis

The factors were calculated with the help of total variance explained. The final 14 factors, which emerged were calculated from the rotated sum of squared value loading which was the outcome of SPSS software.

The factors identified were proficient, holistic wisdom, candid, insightful, sensible, understanding situations, truth loving, relaxed, mature, balanced, optimism, sagacious, calm and development.

Table 2  
*Factor analysis and convergence*

Factor Name	Eigen Value	Variable Convergence	Loadings
Proficient	6.357	19. Show passion and commitment	.718
		14. Understand how people experience conflicting emotions	.678
		15. Manage under pressure	.677
		17. Stay cheerful when things go wrong	.572
		25. Adapt to change	.452
Holistic wisdom	2.324	26. Learn from mistakes	.734
		22. Use instincts and feelings	.658
		24. Reliable and genuine	.591
Candid	2.290	21. Sense feelings and emotions of people	.583
		7. Freely admit to mistakes	.688
		9. Pull myself easily after a setback	.678
		8. Communicate needs and feelings honestly	.486
		16. Remain keen to find challenges	.455
Insightful	2.125	23. Stay focused in getting job done	.424
		27. Try to be sensitive and understanding	.807
		35. Tell when a friend is happy	.759
Sensible	2.063	10. Aware of how my behaviour impacts others	.732
		32. Use different moods to enhance my thinking	.572
		31. Respond to people's emotions	.558
Understanding situations	1.733	33. Understand how emotions lead to anger	.770
		34. Tell when a colleague is embarrassed	.764
Truth loving	1.611	13. Maintain good eye contact	.831
		12. Tell the truth	.602
		11. Pay attention and listen without jumping to conclusions	.391
Relaxed	1.550	38. I laugh when people around me are laughing	.768
		39. People rarely consult me about personal problems	.695
Mature	1.372	1. Stay relaxed and composed under pressure	.623
		28. Take criticisms positively	.771
		18. Understand my developmental needs	.510
		20. Know how to cope with stress	.388

Table 2 (continue)

Balanced	1.240	30. Remain patient with people	.765
Optimism		29. Maintain life and work balance	.615
Sagacious		3. I can put negative feelings out of my mind	.705
		36. Usually de-escalate negative thoughts	.615
	1.104	2. Identify negative feelings	.791
		4. Sensitive to other people's emotions and moods	.111
Calm	1.073	6. Calm myself quickly when I get angry	.646
Development	1.006	37. I know how emotions progress and develop	.722

### Z-Test

To compare the emotional intelligence of male and female academicians and between various age groups, Z-tests were applied (Table 3).

**Comparison of academicians between age groups 25-35 and 40-50.** The z value was 9.91 between age group of 25-35 and 40-50, which was more than standard value, 1.96, at 5% level of significance, therefore the null hypothesis was not accepted which states that there is no significant difference in the emotional intelligence of this age group. It can be observed that attitude towards things at work and towards life varies in these age groups. Young people generally take things lightly and react immediately without giving any thought whereas people at the age of 40-50 generally learn to manage their emotions and behaviour accordingly. In addition, they possess a sense of responsibility so they show consistent behaviour on their work.

It can be proven by comparing the mean values too (Table 3).

**Comparison of academicians between age groups 40-50 and 55 and above.** Since, the z value was 8.61 between age group of 40-50 and 55 and above, which is more than standard value 1.96, at 5% level of significance, therefore in this case too, the null hypothesis is not accepted and we can say that there is significant difference in the emotional intelligence of this age group. By comparing the mean values of both the groups we find that academicians in the age group show higher emotional intelligence in comparison to senior academicians. In our Indian context, people at the age above 55 start losing their potential for doing work and develop fear of getting neglected or being unheard which ultimately disturbs their emotional stability so they show inconsistent behaviour (Table 3).

Table 3  
*Comparison of emotional intelligence between different age groups*

Assumptions	Mean Value	Standard Error	Value Of Z	Difference
X1=25-35(Age group)	X1=5.50708	0.095781	9.91>1.96	Significant
X2=40-50(Age group)	X2=6.448745	0.1078	8.61>1.96	Significant
X2=40-50	X2=6.448745	0.0918	0.146<1.96	insignificant
X3=55 and above	X3=5.520513			
X1=25-35	X1=5.50708			
X3=55 and above	X3=5.520513			

**Comparison of academicians between age groups 40-50 and 55 and above.** In this case the z value was 0.0918 between age group of 25-35 and 55 and above, which was less than standard value, 1.96, at 5% level of significance, therefore the null hypothesis is accepted and it can be concluded that emotional intelligence of both groups is more or less the same. As it can be seen through earlier results, young people and old aged persons are low at handling their emotions, so there is no difference in their emotional intelligence. The results prove to be similar with the

results on emotional intelligence on school teachers in Malaysia as reported by Noriah, Iskandar and Ridzaudin (2010).

**Comparison of emotional intelligence between male and female academicians.**

Critical value for Z-test was 12.18, which is quite higher than table value, 1.96, so the null hypothesis is not accepted which states that there is no significant difference between emotional intelligence of male and female academicians and by comparing mean values, we can further conclude that EQ of females is higher than males (Table 4).

Table 4  
*Comparison of emotional intelligence between males and females*

Assumptions	Mean Value	S.E	Z-value (Standard value=1.96)	Difference
H <sub>04</sub> , X <sub>11</sub> =X <sub>12</sub>	X <sub>11</sub> =5.391523	0.0676683	12.18>1.96	Significant
X <sub>11</sub> = male	X <sub>12</sub> =5.475813			
X <sub>12</sub> =female				

### Z-Test between Factors

Further, Z-test was applied to evaluate the significant difference among the factors, explored during factor analysis (Table 5). Factors like proficient, holistic wisdom, insightful, understanding situations, truth loving and relaxed showed no difference between male and female respondents as their critical value was less than standard value. On the other hand, factors like candid, sensible, mature, balanced, optimism and sagacious showed that there is significant difference between factors whereas two

factors could not be compared as they had only one statement. Mayer and Salovey (1997) showed that emotional intelligence is the composition of different types of competence, which have the possibility to distinguish feelings within the person which affects productivity and increase an individual's performance. Studies indicate that teachers who have increased level of emotional intelligence can perform in a better way than those with less emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Mehmood, Qasim, & Azam, 2013).

Table 5

*Comparison of different factors of emotional intelligence between males and females*

Factors	Assumptions	Z-Value	Difference
1. Proficient	H <sub>05</sub> : X <sub>11</sub> =X <sub>12</sub> X <sub>11</sub> = male X <sub>12</sub> =female	0.320<1.96	Insignificant
2. Holistic wisdom	H <sub>06</sub> , X <sub>1</sub> =X <sub>2</sub>	0.15<1.96	Insignificant
3. Candid	H <sub>07</sub> , X <sub>1</sub> =X <sub>2</sub>	1.96>1.96	Significant
4. Insightful	H <sub>08</sub> , X <sub>1</sub> =X <sub>2</sub>	0.192<1.96	Insignificant
5. Sensible	H <sub>09</sub> , X <sub>1</sub> =X <sub>2</sub>	12.42>1.96	Significant
6. Understanding situations	H <sub>10</sub> , X <sub>1</sub> =X <sub>2</sub>	0.74<1.96	Insignificant
7. Truth loving	H <sub>11</sub> , X <sub>1</sub> =X <sub>2</sub>	0.34<1.96	Insignificant
8. Relaxed	H <sub>12</sub> , X <sub>1</sub> =X <sub>2</sub>	1.48<1.96	Insignificant
9. Mature	H <sub>13</sub> , X <sub>1</sub> =X <sub>2</sub>	4.021>1.96	Significant
10. Balanced	H <sub>14</sub> , X <sub>1</sub> =X <sub>2</sub>	18.542>1.96	Significant
11. Optimism	H <sub>15</sub> , X <sub>1</sub> =X <sub>2</sub>	18.546>1.96	Significant
12. Sagacious	H <sub>16</sub> , X <sub>1</sub> =X <sub>2</sub>	8.57>1.96	Significant

### CONCLUSION

The present study was attempted to examine the difference in emotional intelligence of various age groups and gender. The results of the data analyses revealed that out of

14 factors considered for this study, six have shown no difference between males and females while six show significant difference. Z-test was also applied to compare the difference in emotional

intelligence between age groups. Results show that EQ varies between age groups 25-35 and 40-50, 40-50 and 55 and above. For age groups of 25-35 and 55 and above, there is no difference as the young generation is at the starting phase of learning whereas old aged people have stopped learning.

The conclusion of the study reveals that emotional intelligence of employees is largely affected by the proficiency of a person on the work which has highest Eigen value and the next factor which affects the level of emotional intelligence is the holistic wisdom of the employees last factor is emotional development.

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