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Relationship Between Gender, Emotional Intelligence, and Academic Performance Among College Students

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Relationship Between Gender, Emotional Intelligence, and Academic Performance Among College Students
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Background

- Emotional intelligence has been broken down into a four-branch hierarchy comprised of: emotion perception, emotion facilitation of thought, emotion understanding, and emotion regulation (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).
- A study conducted by Fernández-Berrocal, Cabella, Castilla, & Extremera (2011) found that women displayed a higher emotional intelligence in comparison to men.
- Research has found a correlation between GPA and increased emotional intelligence.
- With a lack of research conducted on the interaction effect between emotional intelligence, gender, and academic success, our goal was to examine the relationships between these factors.

Hypotheses

- We hypothesized that women would display higher overall levels of emotional intelligence in comparison to men in all four levels of Mayer and Salovey's model of emotional intelligence.
- We also predicted that college students with a higher level of emotional intelligence would perform better academically, as measured by GPA.
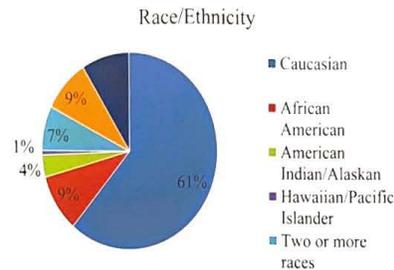
References

Collignon, O., Girard, S., Gosselin, F., Saint-Amour, D., Lepore, F., & Lassonde, M. (2010). Women process multisensory emotion expressions more efficiently than men. *Neuropsychologia*, 48(1), 220-225.

Fernández-Berrocal, P., Cabello, R., Castillo, R., & Extremera, N. (2011). Gender differences in emotional intelligence: The mediating effect of age. *Behavioral Psychology*, 20(1), 77-89.

Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (1997). What is emotional intelligence? In P. Salovey & D. Sluyter (Eds.), *Emotional development and emotional intelligence: Education implications* (pp. 3-31). New York, NY: Basic Books.

Participants

- 145 college students were recruited via the UT Tyler SONA system
- 42 men, 92 women, and 10 not specified
- GPA ranged from 1.8-4.0 (M=3.42, SD=0.48)
- Ages ranged from 18-48 years (M=21.43, SD=5.47)

Race/Ethnicity

- 61% Caucasian
- 9% African American
- American Indian/Alaskan
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Two or more races
- 9%
- 4%
- 1%
- 7%
- 9%

Method

- Participants completed the Profile of Emotional Competence (PEC) test through the UT Tyler SONA system.
- The test consisted of 50 questions measuring emotion perception, emotion facilitation of thought, emotion understanding, and emotion regulation in order to determine a global emotional intelligence score.
- Example items include: "I am good at describing my feelings" and "I am good at lifting other people's spirits."
- Participants were asked to rate their agreement to the statements on a 5-point Likert scale.
- Participants were also asked to report their GPA and demographic information consisting of age, ethnicity, marital status, and gender.
- After completion, students were debriefed on the purpose of the study and provided with additional resources on how to increase one's own emotional intelligence.

Results

- We found no significant gender differences in global emotional intelligence scores, $t(131) = .740$, $p = .46$.
- There was also no effect of GPA, or the interaction between GPA and gender, on global emotional intelligence scores, $F(2, 127) = 1.67$, $p = .19$.
- The results concluded that men and women had relatively similar scores in emotional intelligence overall as a whole. However, when we analyzed the facets of emotional intelligence separately, we found a significant gender difference in emotion perception, $t(131) = 2.3$, $p < .05$.

Gender Differences in Types of Emotional Intelligence

(Bar chart showing Perception, Understanding, Regulation, Facilitation for Men and Women)
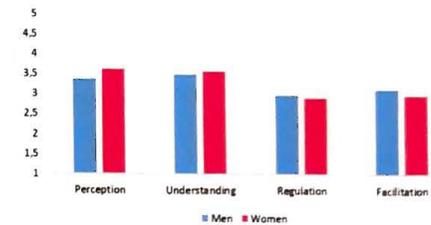
Discussion

- Despite repeated findings that emotional intelligence is a gender dependent trait, this study has not found any correlation between gender and emotional intelligence.
- This study did not provide evidence of high emotional intelligence as a predictor of academic success.
- There was only a significant correlation between gender and emotion perception, with women displaying higher levels of this facet.
- This finding could be a result of biological and social differences between genders working together, thus giving women an advantage (Collignon et al., 2010; Fernández-Berrocal et al., 2011).