

Survey of impact of gender on emotional intelligence of librarians

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to survey the impact of gender on emotional intelligence of librarians of the Qom province state university libraries in Iran.

Statistical Universe: There are sixty librarians working in the Qom province state university libraries of which forty librarians participated in this study. They were selected by using the random sample method. Data were gathered using a standardized questionnaire on emotional intelligence.

Finding and Conclusion: Findings showed that emotional intelligence of the librarians included self-awareness, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills. These were considered at an ideal state. Self-regulation in the librarians was shown at an average level. The Freidman test results showed that emotional intelligence varies and the component to the order of priorities were: Self-awareness, empathy, social skills, self-motivation, and self-regulation.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, librarian, gender, women, men, university library, self-awareness, self-motivation, empathy, social skills.

Paper type: Research paper

1. Introduction, problem description and the necessity to conduct the research

Emotional intelligence is a type of strategic asset which facilitates organizational performance improvement and is needed for success in workplace (King and Gardner, 2006). Researchers who study emotional intelligence believe that it can have important applications and impacts on various activities such as leading and guiding others, developing job path, family life, education, mental health and developing effective workgroups (Zarei Matin, 2009: 18). Emotional intelligence helps people to:

- Become more aware of their personality traits;

- Identify and manage the impacts of emotions of others' behavior and thinking;
- Recognize their capabilities on social dynamics in workplace;
- Understand how to manage their relations with other individuals (Abubakr and Faud, 2007).

People with high emotional intelligence have the skill to interact with other people and control others' feelings. Such skills enhance popularity, leadership potency, and personal influence and make individuals successful in their social activities in maintaining positive relations with others. Researchers have also shown that people with high emotional intelligence possess more power to solve new and daily problems, have positive job growth, maintain professionalism, and show strong leadership.

Like other professionals, librarians are impacted by mental and spiritual pressures and problems and they endure paramount pressures and concerns during their careers (Fatahi, 2004 cited by Shafei Rudposhti and Mirghafouri, 2008). Research by Charles et al (1990), Becker (1993), Affleck (1996) and Siamian et al (2006) (cited by Shafei Rudposhti and Mirghafouri, 2008) reveal the fact that in the contemporary work environments, librarians are highly under mental pressures and ongoing stress in their jobs.

Hence, one can conclude that emotional intelligence is a tool for librarians to overcome mental challenges and pressures and help them in performing their job functions and better services to clients since it is effective in mitigating the tensions and in improving professional conditions at work. The importance of emotional intelligence in a library is double due to the expectations of maintaining direct relations to users. Acquiring emotional intelligence by librarians is highly important in order to enhance the level of personal communications with clients, to conceive clients' informational needs, develop the capability of empathy and accountability with clients, further the capability of effective and efficient management of libraries and information centers, as well as maintain constructive interaction with employees. Librarians with higher emotional intelligence have verbal and nonverbal communicational skills with clients in addition to their constructive relations to their colleagues (Saber, 2008: 16). Therefore, research to measure the emotional intelligence of librarians is necessary due to the job challenges and the undeniable impact of emotional intelligence in meeting them. The study also explores the impact of marital status on emotional intelligence of librarians in the Qom province state university libraries to determine whether there is a difference between the rate of single and married librarians of Qom province state university libraries.

Main aims

1. To study the difference of emotional intelligence between single and married librarians of Qom province state university libraries.
2. To study the status of emotional intelligence in single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries.

Minor aims

1. To study the difference of self-awareness between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries.

2. To study the difference of self-regulation between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries.
3. To study the difference of self-motivation between single and married librarians the Qom province state university libraries.
4. To study the difference of empathy between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries.
5. To study the difference of social skills between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries.
6. To study the status of self-awareness between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries.
7. To study the status of self-regulation between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries.
8. To study the status of self-motivation between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries.
9. To study the status of empathy between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries.
10. To study the status of social skills between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries.

Main questions

1. Is there any difference in emotional intelligence between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries?
2. What is the status of emotional intelligence between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries?

Sub-questions

1. Is there any difference in self-awareness between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries?
2. Is there any difference in self-regulation between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries?
3. Is there any difference in self-motivation between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries?
4. Is there any difference in empathy between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries?
5. Is there any difference in social skills between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries?
6. What is the status of self-awareness between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries?
7. What is the status of self-regulation between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries?
8. What is the status of self-motivation between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries?
9. What is the status of empathy between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries?
10. What is the status of social skills between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries?

2. Conceptual and operational definitions

Emotional intelligence: A set of moral traits such as self-discipline, destructive feelings, effective management skills and control capability, self-confidence, uprightness, rectitude, responsibility, resilience against changes and challenges, innovation, amongst others. Emotional intelligence is so important that psychologists consider the share of rational intelligence as 20% in human success and the share of emotional intelligence as 80%.

University librarian: Any person who works in a university library or in library departments such as reference, trust, technical service, etc.

Emotional intelligence constituents: There are four perspectives on emotional intelligence according to Glodman's model (2002) that is used in the present study. Goldman has introduced the following aspects for emotional intelligence:

1. Self-awareness
2. Self-regulation
3. Motivation
4. Empathy
5. Social skills (Zarei Matin, 2009: 24).

3. Research Literature

Emotional intelligence history

Two thousand years ago, Plato said: "All learning has an emotional basis." Till now, many scientists, researchers and philosophers have conducted paramount studies to prove or disprove the role of feelings in learning. Unfortunately, until recently the dominant thinking was that emotions prevent performance of tasks, the ability to make decisions correctly, and disturb senses concentration. In the recent three decades, growing research has proved the contrary (Zarei Matin, 2009: 19). Since 1900, we can divide psychological activities in this field in four areas:

1. 1900 – 1969: This was the period in which psychological studies on intelligence and emotion were conducted separately. In field of intelligence, the first tests were devised and intelligence was considered as a factor which involved the capability of conducting the affairs and arguing correctly. In studies on emotion, researchers focused on stressful situations and physiological changes.
2. 1970 – 1989: This was the second period in which some progress included work on emotional intelligence. Intelligence and emotion were considered closer to each other in a new field called cognition and affect. In the new field, researchers were looking for proper rules to find to understand affect, what are related issues, and when do they arise. In this period, the impacts of affect on people's thoughts were studied and examined. In the meantime, social intelligence consisted of social skill and empathy skills. *Affect intelligence* term was used in this period. However, its definition was not clear.
3. 1990 – 1997: This was the period in which affect intelligence was studied as a research subject. In this period affect intelligence was regarded as a radical intelligence topic area. It required a more

comprehensive definition of intelligence and promised more radical studies in this field. Mayer and Salovey published some papers on affect intelligence (Zarei Matin, 2009: 19 – 20). Studying emotional intelligence was seriously addressed in both business and general literature through the publication of Goleman's book titled "*Emotional intelligence: Why it is more important than rational intelligence?*" (Mценrue, Groves and Shen, 2009).

4. 1998 – Current: During this period, many terms and revisions were conducted in theoretical and research aspects of affect intelligence. New scales were shaped to measure emotional intelligence and more radical researches were conducted and this trend is continuing now (Zarei Matin, 2009: 19 – 20).

Studying affect intelligence has highly increased in the past decade. Studies on emotional intelligence were increased when it was proved that affects play a vital role in working life. Emotional intelligence has affects on individuals' recognition of the world. Researches on emotional intelligence are focused on the following three fields:

- Definition of emotional intelligence and how to measure it;
- Distinguishing emotional intelligence and other related phenomena such cognitive intelligence and personality traits;
- Studying the relationship between emotional intelligence and various insights, processes, and behavioral results (Mценrue, Groves and Shen, 2009) including researches by Stein, Papadogiannis, Yip & Sitarenios , 2009; Heffernan, Oneill, Travaglione & Droulers, 2008; Koman & Wolff, 2008; Chiva & Alegre, 2008; Suleiman & Al-Shaikh, 2007; Grant, 2007; Kerr, Garvin, Heaton & Boyle, 2006; King & Gardner, 2006; Humphreys, Brunsen & Davis, 2005; Aremu, 2005; Poon, 2004; Kaschub, 2002; Boyatzis, Goleman & Rhee, 2000; Sjoberg, 2001). The findings of this research on emotional intelligence indicated that it can predict future successes similar to or even more than intelligence quotient.

Some research in Iran on this topic includes work done by Shafei Ridposhti and Mirghafouri (2008) who studied the degree of emotional intelligence of librarians in Yazd general libraries. Their questionnaire was devised and distributed among librarians based on the model of Lord and Hagan. Their findings showed that among emotional intelligence aspects, communicating and influencing others, trustworthiness, tendency to serve others, and team building were more powerful than other variables among librarians while variables like organizational informing, self-control, adaptability, empathy and understanding others were weaker.

5. Methodology

This is an applied study in terms of purpose and it is a survey in terms of data gathering method.

Population

Research population consists of all librarians of Qom province state universities libraries (sixty librarians).

Sample volume and sampling method

Forty subjects were selected as sample volume by the Kokaran statistical formula.

$$n = \frac{N Z^2 S^2}{(N-1) d^2 + Z^2 S^2}$$

A sample was determined by simple random method to gather information from application of the questionnaire. The demographical information of the sample is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: The demographical situation of statistical sample.

Experience					Education				Married			Gender		Variables	
Unanswered	15-20 years	10 – 15 years	5 – 1- years	Less than 5 years	Unanswered	M. A.	B. A.	Associate of art	Unanswered	Single	Married	Unanswered	Male		Female
40 %	2.5 %	12.5 %	12.5 %	32.5 %	7.5 %	15 %	62.5 %	15 %	2.5 %	50 %	47.5 %	5%	37.5 %	57.5 %	%

Data collection tool and method

The study was conducted in two steps. In the first step, the reliability and validity of data collection tool (i.e. the standard emotional intelligence questionnaire) was measured.

Measuring tool reliability and validity

In this study, a 33-item standard emotional intelligence questionnaire was used. An important step involved confirming its validity (it means that the measuring tool measures exactly what it should measure) (Diani, 2003: 117). To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, Chronbach's alpha was used as a pre-test (pilot) including 30 librarians in the Qom province state university libraries. According to the responses using Chronbach's alpha test, the questionnaire reliability ratio was computed. Chronbach's alpha for the total distributed questionnaires was 0.89. The results show a sufficient reliability of the devised questionnaire.

Data analysis methods

To describe and analyze the data, SPSS software was used. Also, deductive statistical method was used to analyze data which included the Kolmogromov –

Smirnov test, the average test of a statistical population, and independent statistical population average test.

Data analysis

In this section, collected data from the research questions were analyzed by statistical tests.

To study the normality of research variables, Kolmogromov – Smirnov test is used. Based on the results, the significance ratio of emotional intelligence and constituents is greater than 0.5. So, all research variables were normal in 0.5 error level.

To answer the first question (Is there any difference on emotional intelligence between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries?) as well as 1 – 5 sub-questions, average test of independent subjects was used. The results are shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2: Statistics of single and married librarians.

Variables	Married	Frequency	Average	Standard deviation
Self-awareness	Single	20	3.5768	0.5974
	Married	19	3.6009	0.5714
Self-regulation	Single	20	2.9131	0.6625
	Married	19	3.3045	0.6683
Self-motivation	Single	20	3.2732	0.6002
	Married	19	3.4306	0.5777
Empathy	Single	20	3.4833	0.6257
	Married	19	3.6772	0.6552
Social skills	Single	20	3.4200	0.7281
	Married	19	3.5368	0.6326
Emotional intelligence	Single	20	3.3333	0.5350
	Married	19	3.5100	0.5278

Table 3: Independent test statistics.

t-test for Equality of Means						Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				
%95Confidence Interval of the Difference		Std. Error Difference	Mean Differenc	Sig (2-tailed)	df	t	Sig.			
Upper	Lower									
0.3556	0.4037-	0.1874	0.0241-	0.8980	37.0000	0.1290-	0.9890	0.0000	Equal variances assumed	Self-awareness
0.3551	0.4033-	0.1872	0.0241-	0.8980	36.9980	0.1290-	Equal variances not assumed			
0.0405	0.8233-	0.2132	0.3914-	0.0740	37.0000	1.8360-	0.5830	0.3060	Equal variances assumed	Self-regulation
0.0406	0.8234-	0.2132	0.3914-	0.0740	36.8610	1.8360-	Equal variances not assumed			
0.2252	0.5399-	0.1888	0.1574-	0.4100	37.0000	0.8330-	0.8010	0.0650	Equal variances assumed	Self-motivation
0.2248	0.5396-	0.1886	0.1574-	0.4090	36.9920	0.8340-	Equal variances not assumed			
0.2217	0.6094-	0.2051	0.1939-	0.3510	37.0000	0.9450-	0.6970	0.1540	Equal variances assumed	Empathy
0.2224	0.6101-	0.2054	0.1939-	0.3510	36.6440	0.9440-	Equal variances not assumed			
0.3267	0.5604-	0.2189	0.1168-	0.5970	37.0000	0.5340-	0.7470	0.1060	Equal variances assumed	Social skills
0.3252	0.5589-	0.2181	0.1168-	0.5950	36.7200	0.5360-	Equal variances not assumed			
0.1683	0.5217-	0.1703	0.1767-	0.3060	37.0000	1.0380-	0.9080	0.0140	Equal variances assumed	Emotional intelligence
0.1682	0.5216-	0.1702	0.1767-	0.3060	36.9430	1.0380-	Equal variances not assumed			

As seen in Table 3, since significance ratio in variance tests is greater than 0.5, variances are equal in 0.5% error level. Therefore, the average of independent samples is assumed as equal as variances. According to Table 1 and Table 2, the result is that there is no difference between single and married librarians in terms of emotional intelligence and its aspects (self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills). It means that there is no difference between single and married librarians in Qom province state universities libraries.

To answer the second question (What is the status of emotional intelligence between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries?) and 6 – 10 sub-questions, single statistical population average test was used. The reason for using this test is the normality of research variables. The results for female librarians are outlined in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4: The statistics of single population test for single librarians.

Variables	Frequency	Average	Standard deviation
Self-awareness	20	3.5768	0.5974
Self-regulation	20	2.9131	0.6625
Self-motivation	20	3.2732	0.6002
Empathy	20	3.4844	0.6257
Social skills	20	3.4200	0.7281
Emotional intelligence	20	3.3333	0.5350

Table 5: The statistics of single population average test for single librarians.

Test value = 2.5						
					Confidence 95% Interval of the difference	
Variables	t	df	Sig (2-taile)	Mean difference	Upper	Lower
Self-awareness	8.061	19	0	1.0768	0.7972	1.3564
Self-regulation	2.789	19	0.012	0.4131	0.1030	0.7232
Self-motivation	5.761	19	0	0.7732	0.4923	1.0541
Empathy	7.028	19	0	0.9833	0.6905	1.2762
Social skills	5.651	19	0	0.9200	0.5792	1.2608
Emotional intelligence	6.965	19	0	0.833	0.5829	1.0837

As seen in Table 5, the results of single population average test indicate that the status of emotional intelligence and its aspects (self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills) is ideal. The results of single population average test for married librarians are outlined in Table 6 and Table 7.

Table 6: The statistics of married population test for single librarians.

Variables	Frequency	Average	Standard deviation
Self-awareness	19	3.6009	0.5714
Self-regulation	19	3.3045	0.6683
Self-motivation	19	3.4306	0.5777
Empathy	19	3.6772	0.6552
Social skills	19	3.5368	0.6326
Emotional intelligence	19	3.5100	0.5278

Table 7: The statistics of single population average test for single librarians.

Test value = 2.5						
					Confidence 95% Interval of the difference	
Variables	t	df	Sig (2-taile)	Mean difference	Upper	Lower
Self-awareness	8.399	18	0	1.1009	0.8255	1.3763
Self-regulation	5.247	18	0	0.8045	0.4824	1.1266
Self-motivation	7.021	18	0	0.9306	0.6521	1.2090
Empathy	7.832	18	0	1.1772	0.8614	1.4930
Social skills	7.144	18	0	1.0368	0.7319	1.3418
Emotional intelligence	8.341	18	0	1.0100	0.7556	1.2644

As seen in Table 7, the results of single population average test indicate that the status of emotional intelligence and its aspects (self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills) is ideal among married librarians.

6. Discussion and conclusion

Emotional intelligence is a skill that can control a librarian's states through self-awareness, improve it through self-regulation, understand its impact through empathy, and behave in a manner to increase her/his and others' morale through managing relations (Khaef Alahi and Dostar, 2003: 45).

Research findings show that there is no difference between single and married librarians of the Qom province state university libraries in terms of emotional intelligence and its aspects (self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills). They also indicate that the status of emotional intelligence and its aspects (self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills) among single and married librarians is ideal.

Clinical and scientific research shows that emotional intelligence is a learnt skill that can be improved by participating in specialized courses (Adib Rad, 2004). Therefore, the guidelines to improve those constituents that are not ideal among librarians can be developed through training and one can enhance such constituents. They can help librarians to perform their job functions better, to serve clients better, to mitigate tensions, and to increase job satisfaction.

Research executive recommendations

According to research finding, the following executive recommendations are provided to increase the level of librarians' emotional intelligence:

- According to research findings, it is recommended to hold training courses to enhance those constituents that are weaker among librarians.
- Regarding the importance of emotional intelligence among librarians, it is recommended to pay more attention to emotional intelligence to improve social status of this job and to include a unit titled emotional intelligence in librarian students' materials.

Recommendations for future research

- It is recommended to study librarians in terms of their education, marital status and records.
- It is recommended to repeat similar research for librarians in different libraries.
- It is recommended to study the relationship between emotional intelligence and other factors related to job successful performance.
- It is recommended to study affecting factors on the improvement of emotional intelligence of librarians.

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