

# Emotional Intelligence, Resilience And University Adjustment Of Students: Gender Based Comparative Study

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## ABSTRACT

Present study aims to investigate the gender difference between Emotional Intelligence, Resilience and University adjustment of students. For the same purpose it was postulated that; there will be a significant gender difference between emotional intelligence of students, resilience of students and, university adjustments of students. For this reason total 300 university students (mean age = 21.31, SD= 2.00) studying in graduate and postgraduate degree programs were selected. Once approached after approval from higher authorities participants were given informed consent form. After their consent they were presented with demographic information form followed by Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (Schutte et al., 1998), Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10-item version (Campbell-Sills & Stein, 2007) and Adjustment scale (Weber & Kaya, 2003). For the statistical analysis t-test was utilized to analyze the data. Data analysis indicates significant Gender differences among Emotional intelligence and University Adjustment of Students. Results showed that female students scored higher on Emotional Intelligence and University Adjustment as compare to males. Moreover, no significant gender differences were found in Resilience level of male and female students. Further, Emotional Intelligence subscale analysis reveals significant gender difference on subscale of Perception of Emotions, Managing own Emotions, Managing others Emotions and Utilization of Emotion; females scored higher than males. Likewise, analysis of University Adjustment subscales reveals that significant gender difference was found on subscale of Social Adjustment, Personal Adjustment and Academic Adjustment where females were better adjusted as compare to males.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, University Adjustment of students, Gender Differences

## Introduction

For many students transition to university life immediately after school becomes a difficult task. Students decision to go to college or university has many reasons mainly includes pursuance of higher education and to increase and gain knowledge for personal growth. When moving to university, students are mostly in late adolescents, during which they are confronted with several issues related to physical, academic, social and emotional adjustment. Students have to face problem in managing

their emotions, developing autonomy and their interpersonal relationships (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

According to Arkoff (1968), university adjustment is the reflection of how much an individual has achieved academically and the impact it had on their self-growth. Adjustment is basically a process which is continuous in nature which makes an individual to mold his behavior in such a way to produce harmony between himself and environment (Aggarwal, 1998). Furthermore, adjustment has been

defined as the response which an individual exhibits in response to demands of various types like physical, social and psychological (Napoli, Kilbride & Tebbs, 1988).

Adjustment is a process through which individual tries to establish psychological and physiological equilibrium (Tuckman & Monetti, 2010). Baker and Siryk (1986) have studied university adjustment in depth and viewed it as related to four following domains i.e. academic, social, personal-emotional and goal commitment institutional. One's ability and success to perform responsibilities related to these domains determined their adjustment in college. Academic adjustment included attitude towards academic goals, academic efforts and satisfaction with academic environment. It requires execution of several tasks which are related with educational demands. Social adjustment entails adjusting to and adapting the interpersonal demands of university experiences i.e. making friends, involving in social activities etc. Further it involves adjustment with the social environment university campus. Personal-emotional adjustment is related to the mental and physical health of an individual. Institutional attachment refers to feelings of student regarding the university experiences and level of bonding between individual and institute.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) have described transition to college/university life as a culture shock as it involves adjustments on various social and psychological fronts to accept new ideas, new peers and teachers with different and varied belief systems, new found freedom as well as opportunities which come with new environment. For attaining higher education many students move away from their homes causing minimal contact and support from the family members and friends. At this time problems in adjusting to a new environment causes deteriorated academic performance and pronounced psychological distress (Friedlander et al., 2007). Khalily (2010) has conducted a study and found out that

in Pakistan significant stressors of adolescents are related to academic problems, relationship issues and current social and political situation of country.

Enochs and Roland (2006) examined gender and living environment differences on university adjustment of students in first year. They found out that regardless of living environment overall university adjustment in males was higher than females. Halamandaris and Power (1999) conducted research on 183 first-year students. They found that female student's scores were more on adjustment to university as compare to male students. Few studies suggest that females have greater difficulties adjusting to university life (Abdullah, Elias, Mahyuddin, & Uli 2009). Calaguas (2011) found that males reported greater difficulties in academic, social and personal adjustment. Yalim (2007) conducted study on university students enrolled in first year. Results indicated that males scored high on adjustment as compare to females. He further explored that the factors which predicted university adjustment were different for both genders. For male students' ego resiliency, problem solving coping, seeking social support, and helplessness self-blaming coping were found to be related with better adjustment. In female's ego resiliency, optimism and seeking social support predicted females' better adjustment.

Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler, and Mayer (1999) argued that higher emotional intelligence level enable person to deal with environment effectively by enabling them to correctly appraise and express their emotions and regulating mood states. Emotional intelligence (EI) can be defined as the capacity to monitor others and ones owns emotions, to differentiate among emotions, to identify and, to utilize emotions as guide in thinking and behavior (Coleman, 2008). Emotional intelligence is the ability, potential to understand, identify, manage, communicate, and to explain the emotions (Hein, 2007).

According to Segal and Smith (2013), emotional intelligence is the skill to recognize, comprehend and manage feelings to overcome and handle stress, to understand others feelings and to resolve conflicts.

A study conducted by Amjad, Farzand, Muhammad, and Sheraz, (2013) was an attempt to examine the differences of emotional intelligence across field of study and gender among university students in Pakistan. Results indicated that Emotional Intelligence score of the students of Business Administration was higher than that of Telecom Engineering students. Further Emotional intelligence score of female students was higher than that of males. One of the research on Dental undergraduates by Qaiser (2013) indicated that the level of EQ was higher in males as compared to females further the association between year of study and Emotional intelligence scores was found to be statistically significant. Emotional intelligence is also believed to increase as a person matures (Derksen, Kramer, & Katzko, 2002). Parker et al., (2006) reported that female students exhibited higher levels of emotional intelligence due to which they were more likely to succeed at university. Saklofske, Austin and Minski (2003) however, found no significant gender difference in EI. Sharma (2012) compared the university adjustment processes of first and final year students and their emotional maturity. Results indicated that the first year undergraduate students were not much emotionally mature due to which they faced issues in adjusting to the demands of changing environment socially and emotionally. Moreover, first year students faced more issues related to academics as compared to students of final year. Further they faced more academic issues as compared to final year students.

Similarly, resilience along with emotional intelligence helps individuals deal with adversities and to cope effectively. Personal qualities that make one deal with adversity are covered in resilience and it determines the

successful coping from stress. As the resilience increases the physical and mental health of an individual also improves (Connor & Davidson, 2003). Resilience is the ability of a person to bounce back and deal effectively with the stressors which lead to better adjustment in surrounding whether it is socially or academically or into new environment. It is considered as an individual capacity to overcome difficulties efficiently and adapt to environment effectively (Wagnild & Collins, 2009).

Pooley and Cohen (2010) describe resilience as, “the potential to exhibit resourcefulness by using available internal and external resources in response to different contextual and developmental challenges” (p.34). Wagnild (2009) described resilience as both a trait and a state, which can be increased by building on a person’s strengths and resources.

Though psychological resilience is seen as a personality trait of individuals, further it has also been conceived as a process that changes over the period of time. Luthar et al (2000) referred to resilience as dynamic process which leads to positive adaptation in dealing with adversity or tough situation. Further, researchers even view it as the protective buffer which helps individual in dealing with adversity (Jackson, Firtko, & Edenborough, 2007). Howell (2004) and Walker, Gleaves, and Grey (2006) suggested that resilience is of great importance in terms of both endurance and adaptation. It is the process which changes over time with development and increased interaction with the environment. It helps the individual to adapt well when faced with adversity and stressors (Kim-Cohen & Turkewitz, 2012). Walker, Gleaves, and Grey (2006) stated that in higher educational context as the cognitive demands on student’s increases, resilience is said to play an important role.

In a study conducted by Campbell-Sills, Forde, and Stein (2009) resulted indicated that

male gender, higher income and higher education level were related with and predicted psychological resilience. It has been proposed that resilience increases with age (Feinstein & Hammond, 2004). However, Munro and Pooley (2009) found that mature students did not exhibit higher levels of resilience. Sanders and Sander (2009) found that males coped better. Li (2008) found that males had higher level of resilience. Other studies shows however that females generally tend to be more resilient (DuMont, Widom, & Czaja, 2007).

The present study aims to explore the gender difference between emotional intelligence, resilience and adjustment of university students.

On the basis of literature review and research objectives following hypotheses were formulated:

- H1: There will be significant gender difference between emotional intelligence of university students.  
 H2: There will be significant gender difference between resilience of university students.  
 H3: There will be significant gender difference between university adjustment of males and female students

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

Participants were selected through convenient sampling which is a technique of the non-probability sampling, 300 students (mean age = 21.31, SD= 2.00) were selected from different universities of Karachi city.

### **Inclusion Criteria**

- Participants enrolled in graduate program were selected.

### **Exclusion Criteria**

- Students having the level of education less than intermediate were not selected.
- Participants with prior psychological treatment were not included in the research.
- Students who were enrolled for diploma courses were not included.

## **Measures**

### **Informed Consent Form**

To follow the ethical guidelines, consent form designed in simple language was given to participants. It contained all the relevant information regarding the purpose of research, confidentiality, voluntarily participation and their right to withdraw from study at any time. It contained researcher contact information as well in case any participant wants to know about their individual result.

### **Demographic Information Form**

Demographic information form was used to obtain information related to participants' age, gender, socioeconomic status, university name, semester, degree program enrolled in, previous qualification, employment status etc. Also other information regarding past history of psychiatric issues were collected to assess and select participants for research based on inclusion and exclusion criteria.

### **Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (Schutte et al., 1998)**

It was used to measure emotional intelligence of students. The scale comprises of following subscales: perceptions of emotions, managing own emotions, managing others emotions and utilization of emotions. The scale uses a 5 point likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) with higher scores representative of higher Emotional Intelligence level. Three questions are reverse scored. The scale has good internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha of 0.90 and test retest reliability of 0.78.

### **Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (Campbell-Sills & Stein, 2007)**

The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-10) was utilized to measure resilience. Campbell-Sills and Stein in 2007 refined the original 25-item Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale -25 (CD-RISC-25) and validated a 10-item version of the measure, called the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10 (CD-RISC-10). It comprises of 10-items which are scored on 4 point likert scale ranging from “rarely true” =0 to “true nearly all the time” =4. The total resilience score is equivalent to the total sum of scores on items. Higher scores indicated higher resilience level.

### **Adjustment Scale (Weber & Kaya, 2003)**

This 28-item scale measures different dimensions of adjustment: social, academic, institutional, and personal. Each item is scored on 7 point likert scale (1-7), where 1= “strongly disagree” and 7= “strongly agree”. Negative items were reversed scored. Subscales scores are derived by summing the ratings of all items. Cronbach's alphas for the social, academic, institutional, and personal adjustment subscales were: .71, .70, .77, and .72, respectively. The total adjustment score (Alpha=.83) was equivalent to the total sum of the ratings for all 28 items. Higher scores on subscales indicated better adjustment ratings in that domain and higher overall score indicated better university adjustment.

### **Procedure**

For permission, concerned authorities i.e. Chairperson /Head /Dean of the universities

were contacted through permission letters to seek their approval for data collection. After permission participants were approached individually and in groups. They were briefed about the purpose and objectives of study along with the risks and benefits involved. They were given details regarding confidentiality, voluntary participation and their right to withdraw at any time. They were given consent form followed by demographic information form and self-report questionnaires i.e. Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (Schutte et al., 1998), Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale-10 (CD-RISC-10) and Adjustment scale (Weber &Kaya 2003). Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-22).

### **Ethical Considerations**

The research was conducted keeping in mind the research ethics. At the beginning consent was obtained from participants after briefing them about the purpose and nature of the study. Their confidentiality was ensured and they were briefed about their right to withdraw from the study any time. They were given adequate time to fill in forms. Researcher was available during whole administration process for assistance and answering their queries regarding questions. They were also given researcher's contact details in case they want to know about the results of the study.

### **RESULTS**

In order to explore the gender differences among emotional intelligence and resilience and adjustment of university students t-test was used.

**Table 1 Main Demographic Variables of Participants (N=300)**

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
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Gender		
Male	150	50%
Female	150	50%
Birth Order		
Eldest	83	27.7%
Middle born	136	45.3%
Youngest	74	24.7%
Only child	7	2.3%
Family Structure		
Nuclear	206	68.7%
Joint	94	31.3%

**Table 02 Descriptive Statistics and Univariate Normality of Variables (N=300)**

Variables	Items	$\alpha$	M	SD	Sk	K
Emotional Intelligence	33	.88	118.69	16.67	-.956	1.75
Resilience	10	.80	23.75	7.26	-.13	-.47
University Adjustment	28	.67	122.33	15.36	-.32	1.38

Table 02 represents the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient  $\alpha$ , Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis values of the

all study variables. Skewness value lies between +1 and -1 which represents that data is normally distributed.

**Table 03 t-test Results Showing Gender Differences related to Emotional Intelligence of university students**

Scale/Subscales	Gender	N	M	SD	t	df	p
Emotional intelligence	Male	150	124.03	15.04	5.84	298	.000**
	Female	150	113.35	16.56			
Perception of emotions	Male	150	35.84	6.32	4.70	298	.000**
	Female	150	34.74	5.00			
Managing own emotions	Male	150	33.99	4.07	2.70	287.7	.007**
	Female	150	32.35	5.69			

Managing others emotions	Male	150	30.14	4.07	6.13	285.3	.000**
	Female	150	26.89	5.04			
Utilization of emotions	Male	150	24.06	3.58	6.19	298	.000**
	Female	150	21.37	3.94			

df=298      \*\* $\rho < .05$

Table 03 indicated that gender difference does exist with respect to level of emotional intelligence i.e. (298) = 5.84,  $\rho < .05$ . Further on subscale of perception of emotion (298) = 4.70,  $\rho < .05$ , managing own emotions (287.7) = 2.70,

$\rho < .05$ , managing others emotions (285.3) = 6.13,  $\rho < .05$  and utilization of emotions (298) = 6.19,  $\rho < .05$  significant gender differences are found.

**Table 04 t-test Results Showing Gender Differences related to Resilience of university students**

Scale	Gender	N	M	SD	t	df	$\rho$
Resilience	Male	150	24.29	7.35	1.27	298	.204
	Female	150	23.22	7.15			

df=298

Table 04 indicated that no significant gender difference is found in the level of resilience  $t(298) = 1.27$ ,  $\rho > .05$

**Table 05 t-test Results Showing Gender Differences related to Adjustment of University students**

Scales/subscales	Gender	N	M	SD	t	df	$\rho$
Social adjustment	Male	150	30.39	5.02	1.29	293	.05**
	Female	150	29.32	4.50			
Academic adjustment	Male	150	29.17	5.47	3.49	298	.001**
	Female	150	26.95	5.51			
Institutional adjustment	Male	150	31.91	5.41	-.35	298	.72
	Female	150	32.15	6.68			
Personal adjustment	Male	150	33.77	5.87	2.79	298	.006**
	Female	150	31.96	5.34			
Overall adjustment	Male	150	125.25	14.64	3.34	298	.001**
	Female	150	119.41	15.57			

df=298      \*\* $\rho < .05$

Table 5 indicated that gender difference does exist with respect to university Adjustment of students i.e.  $t(298)=3.34, p<.05$ . Subscales analysis reveals that significant gender difference was found on subscales of social adjustment  $t(293)=1.29, p<.05$ , academic adjustment  $t(298)=3.49, p<.05$ , and personal adjustment  $t(298)=2.79, p<.05$ . However on subscale of institutional adjustment  $t(298)=-.35, p>.05$  no significant gender difference was found.

## DISCUSSION

The research aimed to analyze the gender differences with respect to emotional intelligence, resilience and adjustment of university students. The overall findings of this study suggests significant gender differences between emotional intelligence and university adjustment of students however no significant gender difference was found on the construct of resilience.

Results indicate significant gender difference on emotional intelligence construct where females were found to have higher level of emotional intelligence as compared to males (Table 03). Subscales analysis reveals significant gender difference on subscale of perception of emotions, managing own emotions, managing other emotions and utilization of emotions where females scored higher as compare to males. These results are supported by studies conducted by King (1999), Sutarso (1999), Wing and Love (2001) and Singh (2002), which revealed that emotional intelligence level in females is higher as compared to males. Society and upbringing has a major role to play in this since women are more intimate in relationships as compared to males (Sandhu & Mehrotra, 1999), and they tend to be more sensitive to the needs of others. In studies conducted by Tapia (1999) and Dunn (2002) it was revealed that females' scores were higher on the scales of empathy, interpersonal and social relationships; further they were found to be more sensitive towards their family, friends, and siblings. All these factors help

them to develop more emotional intelligence as compared to males.

Contrary to previous researches no significant gender difference was found on the construct of resilience among university students (Table 04). Possible reason could be that gender equality prevalence in society, due to which society now focuses on providing same opportunities to both genders which enables females to explore their potentials through self-discovery which in return nurture their positive self view which helps in building resilience. This might be the contributory factor for having no significant gender difference in resilience.

Similarly, results indicate significant gender difference on student's university adjustment where females were found to be more adjusted in university as compare to males (Table 05). Subscales analysis suggests significant gender difference on subscales of social adjustment, academic adjustment and personal adjustment. However on subscale of institutional adjustment no significant gender difference was found. Calaguas (2011) found that males have reported of facing greater difficulties in academics, social and personal adjustment in university as compared to females. Since females students seems to posses better emotional intelligence as indicated by results (Table 03) it might have contributed in their better social, personal and academic adjustment at university. These finding are consistent with previous research Parker et al., (2006) reported that female students scored higher on emotional intelligence which is precisely the reason they were more likely to succeed and adjust in university.

## Conclusion

The study aimed to explore the gender differences among emotional intelligence, resilience and university adjustment of students. Research finding shows that gender differences are found to be significant on the

construct of emotional intelligence and university adjustment where females scored higher as compare to males. Emotional intelligence subscales analysis reveals that females scored more as compare to males on subscale of perception of emotions, managing own emotions , managing other emotions and utilization of emotions. Subscale analysis of university adjustment of students reveals significant gender difference on subscales of social adjustment, academic adjustment and personal adjustment. However on subscale of institutional adjustment no significant gender difference was found. Moreover, no significant gender difference is found on overall score of resilience.

### Limitations and Recommendation

Limitation of study should be considered while interpreting results of the study. Only 300 participants were selected for the study; for future researches it is recommended to increase the sample size including participants from diverse background to enhance the validity of data.

Self-report questionnaires were used for measuring resilience, emotional intelligence, and university adjustment. Therefore, it is suggested for future researches to have qualitative analysis as well.

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