

Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Interpersonal Tolerance among University students in Pakistan

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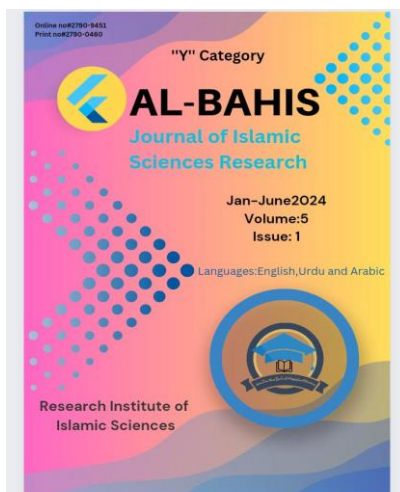
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Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Interpersonal Tolerance among University Students in Pakistan

Abstract

The study was focused on measuring the influence of emotional intelligence on interpersonal tolerance of university students in Pakistan. Interpersonal tolerance refers to mutual respect and acceptance of differences related to values, views, opinions, religion, etc. Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand the feelings of others and to manage one's own emotions positively. It helps develop stable relationships and make life adjustments. The sample of 150 students was collected online via Google from different universities in Pakistan. Two standardized scales were used namely the Brief emotional intelligence scale and the Interpersonal tolerance measure, to collect responses. It was hypothesized that emotional intelligence would be a predictor of interpersonal tolerance. The other hypothesis was that there would be differences in emotional intelligence and interpersonal tolerance among undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate students. The regression analysis indicated that emotional intelligence significantly influences the interpersonal tolerance level of participants. It was also found that the young undergraduate students had lower interpersonal tolerance and emotional intelligence than the graduate and postgraduate students. Emotional intelligence and interpersonal tolerance are significantly important factors for social competence and better adjustment. Interpersonal relationships build on mutual respect, understanding, and acceptance of each other. Therefore, researchers need to design interventions for youngsters to train them on emotional intelligence and to improve their interpersonal tolerance to practice stable relationships and better social adjustment.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Interpersonal Tolerance, University students, Undergraduates, Graduate students, Pakistan

Introduction

The diversity of thoughts, values, and attitudes has always been a part of human society, dating back to the Stone Age. However, in today's world, social media has made this diversity more visible and prominent. Accepting and positively engaging with different perspectives, attitudes, and values helps build strong relationships between individuals. Emotional intelligence involves understanding others' feelings and emotions and effectively managing one's emotions¹. Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions and the emotions of others.² Scientific literature suggested that emotional intelligence is consistently linked to better mental well-being, good social support, low stress, depression, and life contentment³. Self-control enables one to solve daily life challenges positively, and to build stable interpersonal relationships and communication in a social environment.⁴ Interpersonal tolerance refers to mutual respect, equality, and freedom, which is a complex phenomenon, that provides help in social adjustment to individuals.⁵ Findings suggest that young adolescents attempt to cope with the situation emotionally, but their aggressive attitude tends to escalate conflict and disrupt interpersonal harmony in a social setting. On the other hand, those who have emotional control deal the matters efficiently and more smoothly.⁶ Self-control is necessary in all aspects of life, such as within marriages, among family members, and among community members with different views and opinions, as well as in the workplace. Without emotional control, it is difficult to build harmony and peace in any environment. Self-control acts as a protective

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². Goleman, D. Working with Emotional Intelligence. Bantam; New York, D. NY, USA. 1998, P 60

³. Nida A, Mariam S, Mafia S, M., Sanobar K, and Madeha I, Distress Tolerance and Mental Health Problems among University Students, *Pakistan Journal of Health Sciences* 2024, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54393/pjhs.v5i03>. P 76-78.

⁴. Farooq Nawaz Khan, Maryum Imad, Huma Shakir. Exploring The Effects of Emotional Intelligence on Students' Academic Performance: A Case of University Students in KPK, Pakistan , *Journal of Social & Organizational Matters*, 2(3), 2023, P 99-109.

⁵. Leszek Tadeus Jasiński, and Sztejnberg Aleksander, 2018 , Shyamara T and Pushpavati U Kochrekar, 2024 .Mood and emotions experienced by the physical education students during the studies, *International Journal of Physical education Sports and Health*, 5(4), P37-41

⁶. Mery Helen Immordino-Yang and Antonio Damasio, 2007, Drigas and Chara Papoutsis, 2018; Hjerm Mikael, Eger Maureen A, Bohman, Andrea, & Fors Connolly F, 2020;

mechanism to manage and reduce interpersonal conflicts, and it contributes to increased social cohesion.⁷

Tolerance describes the capacity to accept the differences that people have, such as in values, beliefs, and behaviors. Some researchers argued that high levels of interpersonal tolerance (IT) may be disadvantageous.⁸ Studies have shown that young adults who lack understanding of their emotions may struggle to control emotional outbursts in stressful or conflicted situations. On the other hand, those who can manage their feelings and emotions do well in any negative, stressful event or in a situation of conflict.⁹ A lot of people struggle with managing their emotions, which can affect their ability to communicate positively and build good relationships with others. This shift can lead to negative outcomes like conflict, bullying, and social isolation, instead of positive mental health and strong social support. That's why it's important to understand the emotional intelligence and interpersonal tolerance levels of university students at different academic levels. These findings can guide ways to help students develop these important skills and abilities.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate how emotional intelligence predicts interpersonal tolerance behavior. Additionally, the study compared emotional intelligence and interpersonal tolerance behavior among undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate university students. Emotional control and tolerance are important qualities for building positive interpersonal relationships, effective communication, and the overall well-being of young adults. The findings of this study can provide valuable insights for psychologists, counselors, teachers, and parents to better understand and support young adults.

Objectives

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To evaluate how emotional intelligence affects interpersonal tolerance behavior.
2. To compare the levels of emotional intelligence and interpersonal tolerance among undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate university students.

⁷. Morales-Rodríguez, F.M., Espigares-López, I., Brown, T. & Pérez-Márm, J. M. 2020.

⁸. Verkuyten Maykel, Yogeeswaran Kumar, and Adelman Levi, The social psychology of intergroup tolerance and intolerance, *European Review of Social Psychology* 34(1), 2022, P 1-43

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⁹. Llamas Desiree D, Cabello Roserio, Megias Alberto Robels, and Fernandez-Berrocal Pabelo, Systematic review and meta-analysis: The association between emotional intelligence and subjective well-being in adolescents, *Journal of Adolescence* (2022), 94(7), DOI:10.1002/jad.12075 P. 7,8

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to achieve the objectives:

- H1:** Emotional intelligence will significantly predict interpersonal tolerance behavior in university students.
- H2:** Emotional intelligence and interpersonal tolerance will significantly differ among undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate participants.

Operational Definition

1. **Emotional Intelligence:** It refers to the understanding and managing of one's own emotions about others' emotions. It is also called social-emotional awareness ^{.10}
2. **Interpersonal Tolerance:** Interpersonal tolerance is respect and acceptance of the diversity of others' values and beliefs. It is a value orientation toward difference¹¹

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study was cross-sectional survey research conducted between different groups. It was a quantitative study.

Sample

The sample consisted of 150 participants, including 63 undergraduate, 55 MS/MPhil, and 42 PhD university students of both genders. The data was collected online from students attending various universities in Pakistan, with ages ranging from 19 to 50 years.

Instruments

The Following scales were used in the study;

1. **Brief Self-report Emotional Intelligence Scale:** It is a standardized self-report measure used to assess the level of emotional intelligence of respondents. It consists of 10 items. All items are scored on a five-point scale ranging from 5 (Always) to 1(Never). High scores show a better level of emotional intelligence. The alpha reliability coefficient of this scale is $r = .91$
2. **Interpersonal Tolerance Scale:** This scale comprised of 34 items. It assesses tolerance for different groups. A high score shows better tolerance. The Cronbach Alpha is from .81. ¹²

^{10,10}. Goleman, D.(1998), Working with Emotional Intelligence. Bantam; New York, D. NY, USA. P 60/386.

¹¹. Mikael Hjerm, Mauren A. Eger, Andrea Bohman, and Phillip F. Conolly ,A New Approach to the Study of Tolerance: Conceptualizing and Measuring Acceptance, Respect, and Appreciation of Difference. Social Indices Research (2020)
, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-01902176> P 897/919 . P 147

¹². Manuela Thomae, Mischel D Birtel and Jorg Witteman (2016), the Interpersonal Tolerance Scale (IPTS): Scale Development and Validation, Conference Paper, P.1-6

Procedure

The research questionnaires and a demographic sheet was presented in an online format to potential participants with Google Forms. Teachers of different universities were approached by PI to share the link of the questionnaires with undergraduate, MS/MPhil, and PhD university students. The researcher adhered to ethical standards and sought informed consent in the first place and later on maintained the anonymity of participants' responses. Participation in this research was not causing any physical or psychological risk to participants and they were allowed to withdraw their participation at any time. Data analysis was performed only by filled questionnaires.

Analysis of Results

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Variable	N	%
Education		
BS/MSc/MA	63	42 %
MS/MPhil	55	36 %
PhD	42	28 %
Total	150	
Age		
19-25	52	38.4 %
26-35	36	26.8 %
36-45	38	23.3 %
46-55	24	11.5 %
Total	150	
Gender		
Male	88	58.6 %
Female	62	41.4 %
Total	150	

H1: Emotional intelligence will significantly predict interpersonal tolerance behavior in university students.

Table 2

Linear Regression Analysis: Predicting Interpersonal Tolerance from Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Variables	R^2	ΔR^2	B	SE	t	P
EI	.136	.13	.369	.037	5.27***	.000

The results of Linear Regression as presented in Table 2 found a statistically significant predictive relationship between emotional intelligence and interpersonal tolerance ($R^2 = .136$, $F = 71.03$, $p = .000$). The R-Square value indicates that emotional intelligence explains 13 % of the variance in interpersonal tolerance. The B value indicates a .369 increase in the tolerance level with every 1-point increase in the emotional intelligence score.

H2: Emotional intelligence and interpersonal tolerance would significantly differ among undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate participants.

Table 3

One-way ANOVA of the scores of undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate students on emotional intelligence (EI) and interpersonal tolerance (IPT)

Variables	BS		MS/MPhil		PhD		F	Post Hoc
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
EI	18.6	2.16	40.1	4.12	40.9	8.36	62.17***	B & C > A
IPT	30.1	2.11	44.1	5.57	44.1	5.21	26.24***	B & C > A

Note: $df = 148$, *** $p < .001$

One-way analysis of variance indicates statistically significant differences in the emotional intelligence, and interpersonal tolerance

levels of undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate participants. Results show that the undergraduate participants have low emotional intelligence ($M=18.6$; $Sd=2.16$) and low interpersonal tolerance ($M=30.1$; $Sd=2.11$) mean scores as compared to emotional intelligence ($M=40.1$; $Sd=4.12$) and interpersonal tolerance ($M=44.1$; $Sd=5.57$) levels of the graduate students. Similarly emotional intelligence ($M=40.9$; $Sd=8.36$) and interpersonal tolerance ($M=44.1$; $Sd=5.21$) levels of postgraduate (PhD students) are better than undergraduate students but similar to graduate students. These findings are consistent with the formulated hypothesis.

Discussion

The findings indicated that emotional intelligence is a significant positive predictor of interpersonal tolerance. It reveals the importance of emotional stability in individuals to have positive interpersonal relationships with others. This predictive relationship indicates that higher emotional intelligence makes us more tolerant toward other people living in our surroundings and as a whole helps us to build a peaceful society. We can observe that due to uncertainty and chaos in our society, interpersonal tolerance is leading to religious, political, and ethnic conflicts, that sometimes inflame violent extremism and in worse cases lead to terrorism. The digital terrorism in our society is the best example to understand this phenomenon.

It is also found that undergraduate young students have low emotional intelligence and low interpersonal tolerance as compared to graduate and postgraduate students. These findings are in line with the previous studies¹³. It can be inferred that a high level of education enhances emotional intelligence levels and also improves interpersonal tolerance levels. University education usually opens new and bright avenues for future career choices but at the same time, it also triggers impulsivity, anxiety, and uncertainty. Usually, this ambivalent pattern of thinking is more prevalent among undergraduates. Higher vulnerability to low emotional control often leads them to utilize their emotional intelligence less as compared to other graduates and post-graduate counterparts.¹³

The emotional balance leads to an empathetic and harmonious environment in society. The growing adults need to be more skilled to meet the challenges of life. For this reason, they need to learn emotional control, and tolerance to have good interpersonal communication and

¹³. Nida Anwar, Mariam S, Mafia S, Sanobar K, and Madeha I, Distress Tolerance and Mental Health Problems among University Students, Pakistan Journal of Health Sciences, 5(3) 2024. . DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54393/pjhs.v5i03.1336> p. 77-78

relations with others. An individual's level of self-awareness, understanding of others' emotions, and ability to control oneself helps to maintain a cohesive social environment and social support for better adjustment. Negative emotions lead to intolerant behavior and poor mental health, which create more problems. Therefore, the guidance and awareness about emotional control and interpersonal tolerance on social adjustment and mental health, and positive wellbeing play significant roles.

Future research should utilize a large sample. Due to an imbalanced number of male and female participants, this research did not analyze the data to assess gender differences, future research should analyze gender differences as well as other demographic variables like age, marital status, occupation, and financial status. This research has not analyzed the specific relationship between subdomains of emotional intelligence and interpersonal tolerance, future research should focus on finding out which domain (e.g., empathy) is most significantly predicting interpersonal tolerance.

It can be concluded that emotional intelligence predicts interpersonal tolerance and higher education leading to higher emotional intelligence and interpersonal reliance. Policymakers with the help of psychologists should consider developing some programs to enhance the emotional intelligence level of university students and make them useful citizens of Pakistan.

Recommendations

In light of the results following recommendations can be considered:-

1. Young students of university need proper guidance and awareness about emotional intelligence and tolerance for social adjustment and mental well-being in life ahead. For this reason, awareness lectures, and training workshops should be arranged in academic institutions and universities.
2. The school is the foundation or primary stage, so, at this level, the material related to emotional intelligence, interpersonal tolerance, positive communication styles, and better well-being should be introduced in the textbooks.
3. All age groups from children to old age individuals are attached to social media forums, so this forum can be used to spread awareness about emotional stability and tolerance at the grassroots level.



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