The Ei - Gender Nexus Among Management Students: An Sdg Perspective

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Abstract:
Emotion is a deep part of one's personality & life. For decades, Emotional Intelligence (EI) has been a hot topic in the field of psychology. EI has become an important predictor of academic and job performance, particularly in management education, where social and emotional skills are vital. Nevertheless, a lack of in-depth analysis specifically highlights gender inequalities in management education. The objective of this study was to investigate gender differences in EI among management students by measuring fundamental EI elements such as self-awareness, empathy, self-regulation, motivation and social skills through the lens of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The study followed the quantitative research methodology with 100 management students across various institutions of Greater Noida. The primary data was obtained using a standardised questionnaire. Statistical tools like mean and correlation were applied. The results were analysed to study the gender differences and they showed that there is no considerable difference between male students and female students in EI and its elements. This study contributes to the broader conversation surrounding gender and EI in management education, by highlighting the role of gender balanced emotional competencies in shaping future-ready, ethically-driven professionals committed to sustainable leadership and inclusive development. Moreover, this research also offers tangible insights for educators, curriculum designers and practitioners.
Keywords: Emotional Intelligence (EI), Gender, Management Students, Greater Noida, Emotional Sustainability, Equity in Management Education, Holistic Human Development, SDG etc.

INTRODUCTION:

Nature gifted us with emotions. Success is highly predictive and highly determined by a person's feelings. Psychologists and researchers are now engaged in EI. In academic and professional contexts, EI is vital to human potential. It encompasses a spectrum of competencies related to the understanding, regulation and utilisation of emotions within oneself and others. The purpose of this study is to investigate gender differences in EI among management students with the aim of given that gender inequalities have attracted attention and discussion. Also, studies show that males and females experience emotions differently and its reflection in socialization methods and coping methods. Knowing these differences is key to designing teaching approaches that will resonate with students' different emotional terrains. The empirical findings of this study will help educational institutions, employers and policymakers in developing a clearer discussion around gender-specific EI dynamics to achieve SDG.

Elements of EI:
The five key elements of EI are:
1. **Self-Awareness:** This involves being aware of and understanding your own emotions, strengths, weaknesses, drives, values and how they affect others. It is the basis of EI.
2. **Self-Regulation:** This is about managing your emotions skilfully. It means controlling the urge to act, adjusting to different conditions, handling stress and owning your choices.
3. **Motivation:** This is not only about external rewards - getting a raise or a good bonus - but also about loving the work itself; having a strong desire to succeed, being optimistic and being goal-oriented.
4. **Empathy:** This is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others; it involves being sensitive to others' views, actively caring about their problems and identifying their feelings.

5. **Social Skills:** This involves the development and maintenance of healthy relationships. It includes great communication, teamwork, conflict resolution and the ability to persuade and motivate people.

Figure 1: Elements of EI

In summary, these five EI components are interrelated and form a cohesive structure through which to study, shift and control both personal and interpersonal emotional life.

Significance of the Study:

Another theory aligns with the need to 'get real' in its focus on the importance of gender, a gender critical approach to understanding EI offers valuable insights for the design of curricula, executive education and personal development programmes across management education. By writing a broad-based awareness of EI, educators/service should be able to assist students to develop the sociocultural interaction, intellectual and emotional competencies they can thrive in agile and competitive scenarios This study contributes to the growing literature on EI, highlighting the need for gender-sensitive approaches in the training of future leaders within the context of SDG.

Description:

Relevant SDGs and their Academic Linkages:

SDG	Focus	Connection to EI - Gender - Achievement
SDG 4: Quality Education	Inclusive, equitable education	Developing EI in a gender – sensitive way helps improve learning outcomes, motivation and academic success
SDG 5: Gender Equality	Equal access and empowerment	Gender based EI research exposes emotional barriers to academic success and promotes equal opportunity
SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	Inclusive academic achievement	Addressing gender gaps in EI supports marginalised genders in reaching full academic potential

Table 1 - Relevant SDGs and their Academic Linkages

Below is a thorough framework for examining EI with a gendered perspective, paying special attention to its impact on management students. The interrelated aspects define our general comprehension of EI and the implications at ground level. Figure 2 represents the relationship of EI with gender and

psychological challenge as a basis for empirical studies for better academic and professional performance of management students.
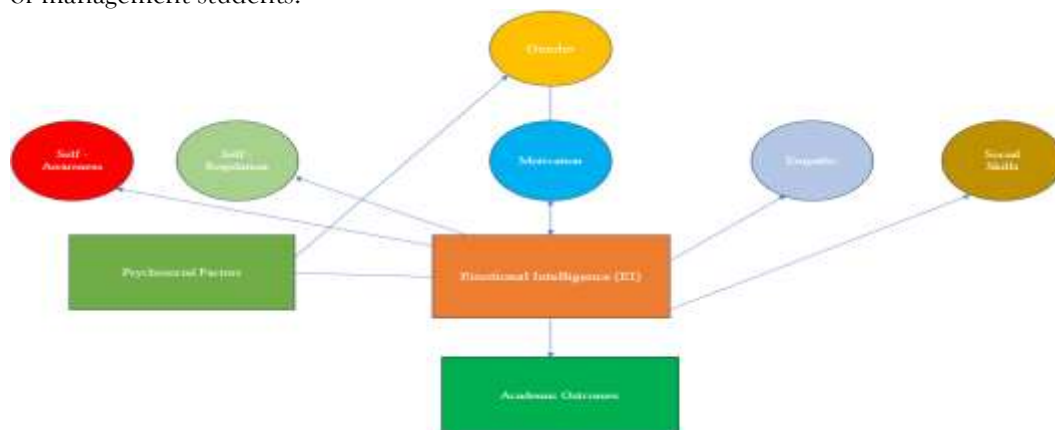

Figure 2: Theoretical Framework Diagram

LITERATURE REVIEW:
Vadivel and Kate (2020) discovered no significant differences in total EI between genders among medical students but did observe variability in subscales such as emotional regulation. According to Ajmal et al. (2020), male students were more motivated to achieve their goals, whereas females excelled at empathy. Shetty et al. (2021) suggested that female management students had superior interpersonal abilities, whereas males were better at stress management. Fernández-Berrocal et al. (2022) reported increased EI in females, focussing on empathy and self-awareness domains. Yorke et al. (2021) found that EI was associated with higher academic accomplishment, particularly among female business students. Petrides et al. (2022) identified gender-specific markers of EI, with females outperforming in social skills. Schutte et al. (2021) demonstrated the efficacy of EI evaluation methods in detecting gender inequalities in educational contexts. As reviewed by Anurag Agarwal et al. (2024), the students who were qualifying higher in EQ were performing better in their academics indicating how important the role of emotional competencies in the effective learning occurred. Lopes et al. (2023) proposed that gender influences emotional control skills in collaborative contexts. Alonso and Viswesvaran (2004) discovered that females exhibited higher levels of EI. Cakan and Altun (2005) reported no differences in EI by gender, age or employment experience. Shehzad and Mahmood (2013) investigated and determined that there is no difference in EI by gender. Singh (2002) found that females have a greater EI than males. Dunn (2002) concluded that girls outperformed boys in terms of empathy. Fitzgerald et al. (2023) suggested that gender disparities in EI influenced workplace collaboration and group dynamics.

These contradictory outcomes motivated the researchers to revisit the topic and look into EI in terms of gender in the local context.

Statement of Problem:
Gaining awareness on EI is important since it contributes significantly to our daily life, academic success and career development. The investigation is examining the differences between male and female EI among management students as females mature before boys.

Research Gap:
While the former studies add to the accumulating evidence on the relationship between EI and academic performance, there is hardly any empirical research that approaches EI in an in-depth manner to address gender-inequities in management education. With this in mind, this study intends to bridge the gap by investigating gender differences in EI among management students.

Research Question:
What are the differences in EI and its components between genders among management students?

Research Objective:
To investigate the gender differences in EI and its dimensions among management students.

Research Hypothesis:
Null Hypothesis (H$_{01}$): There is no statistically significant difference in EI and its components between male and female management students.
Alternate Hypothesis (H$_{A1}$): There is statistically significant difference in EI and its components between male and female management students.
Research Methodology:
- ➢ Type of Research: Quantitative (Empirical)
- ➢ Sources of Data Collection: Survey Method (Structured Questionnaire)
- ➢ Type of Data: Primary Data
- ➢ Research Instruments: MS Excel, SPSS
- ➢ Sampling Unit: MBA Students
- ➢ Population: Management Students of current academic year (Greater Noida)
- ➢ Sample Size: 100
- ➢ Sampling Technique: Random Sampling
- ➢ Statistical Tool used: Mean, Correlation etc.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.784	14

Table2: Reliability Test
The Cronbach's Alpha value for the 14 items in the questionnaire is 0.784. This indicates strong internal consistency, suggesting that the items collectively measure the underlying construct of EI reliably.
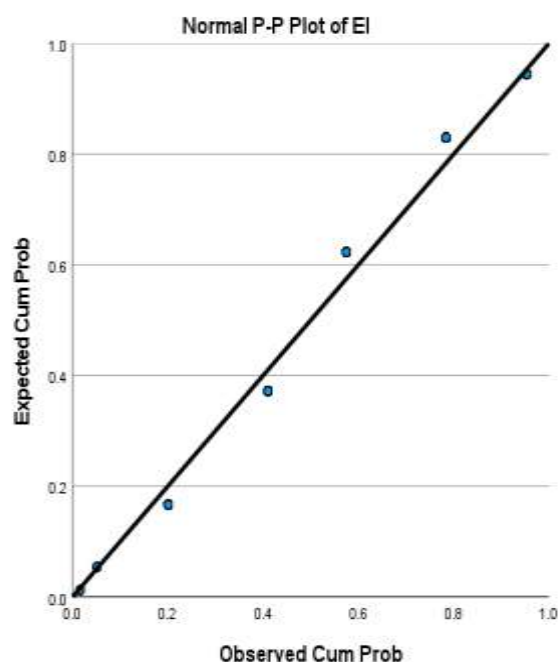

Figure 3: Normality Test 1

The P-P plot shows that the standardized residuals of the regression model for EI are closely aligned with the diagonal line, indicating that the residuals are approximately normally distributed.
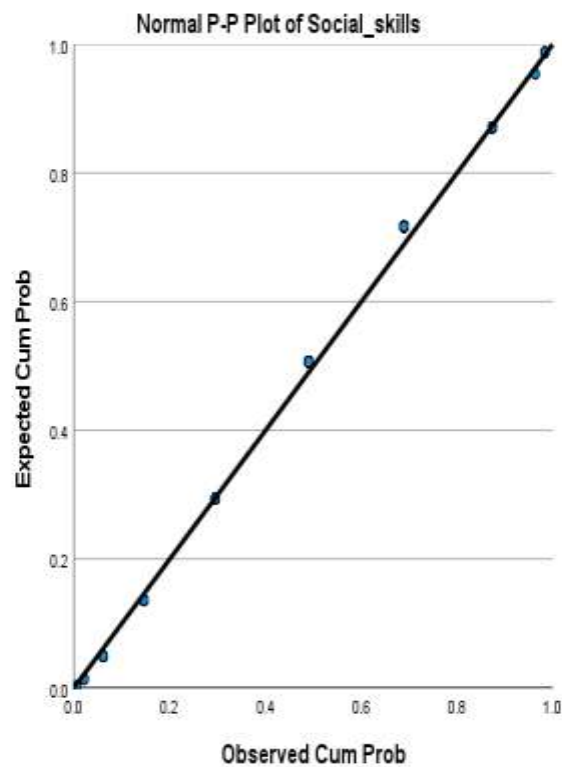
Figure 4: Normality Test 2
The P-P plot shows that the standardized residuals of the regression model for social skills are closely aligned with the diagonal line, indicating that the residuals are approximately normally distributed.
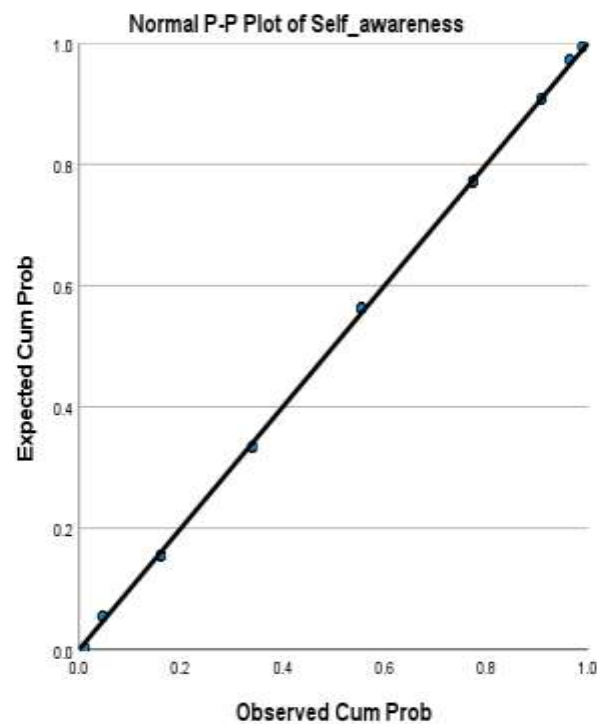

Figure 5: Normality Test 3
The P-P plot shows that the standardized residuals of the regression model for self-awareness are closely aligned with the diagonal line, indicating that the residuals are approximately normally distributed.
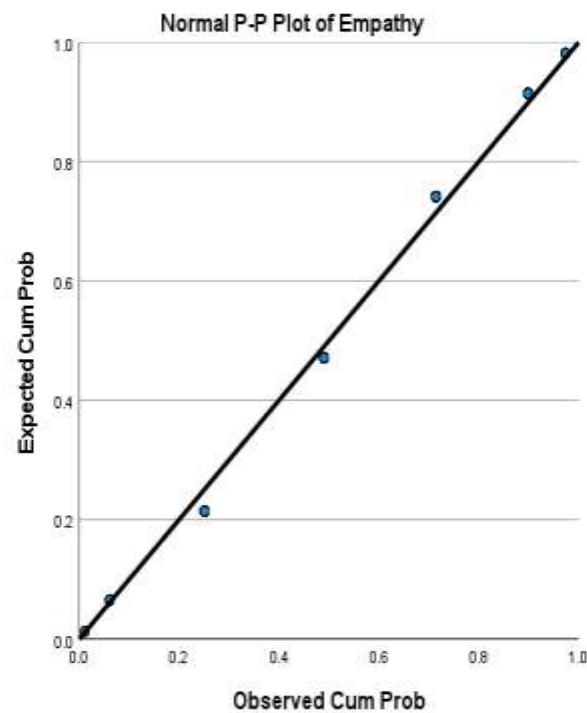
Figure 6: Normality Test 4
The P-P plot shows that the standardized residuals of the regression model for empathy are closely aligned with the diagonal line, indicating that the residuals are approximately normally distributed.
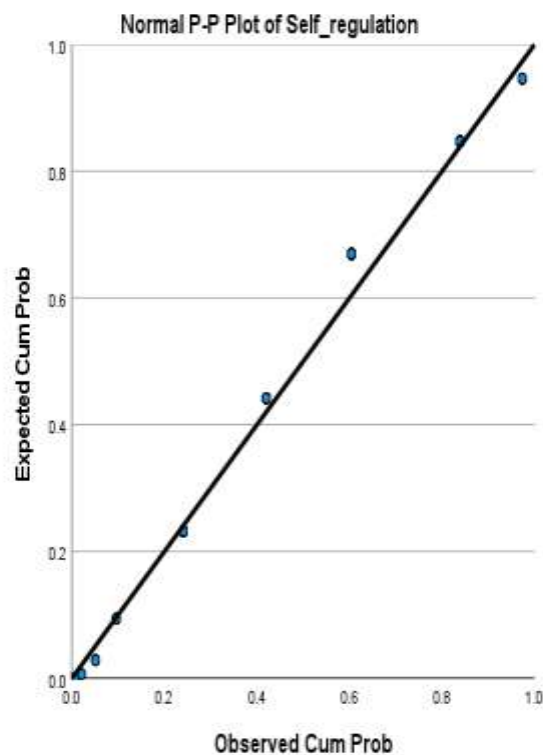

Figure 7: Normality Test 5
The P-P plot shows that the standardized residuals of the regression model for self-regulation are closely aligned with the diagonal line, indicating that the residuals are approximately normally distributed.
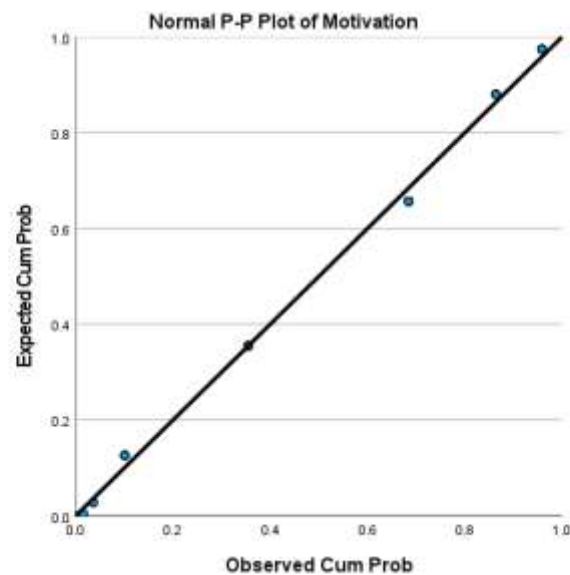
Figure 8: Normality Test 6

The P-P plot shows that the standardized residuals of the regression model for motivation are closely aligned with the diagonal line, indicating that the residuals are approximately normally distributed.

	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Conclusion (p < 0.05)
EI - Social Skills	0.399	0.000	Significant
EI - Self-Awareness	0.292	0.003	Significant
EI - Empathy	0.438	0.000	Significant
EI - Motivation	0.209	0.036	Significant
EI - Self Regulation	0.113	0.263	Insignificant

Table 3 – Correlation of EI (Component wise)

The analysis revealed significant positive correlations between EI and most of its components. Social Skills (r = 0.399, p = 0.000), Self-awareness (r = 0.292, p = 0.003), Empathy (r = 0.438, p = 0.000), and motivation (r = 0.209, p = 0.036) were all significantly associated with EI. However, self-regulation did not show a significant correlation with EI (r = 0.113, p = 0.263).

	Gender	Number	Mean	Sig.
EI	Male	48	3.7188	0.658
	Female	52	3.7885	
Social Skills	Male	48	3.6389	0.777
	Female	52	3.6731	
Self-Awareness	Male	48	3.5208	0.348
	Female	52	3.6282	
Empathy	Male	48	3.5000	0.492
	Female	52	3.5962	

Self-Regulation	Male	48	3.5000	0.161
	Female	52	3.7404	
Motivation	Male	48	3.6771	0.352
	Female	52	3.7981	

Table 4 – Descriptive Statistics of EI Competencies (Gender)

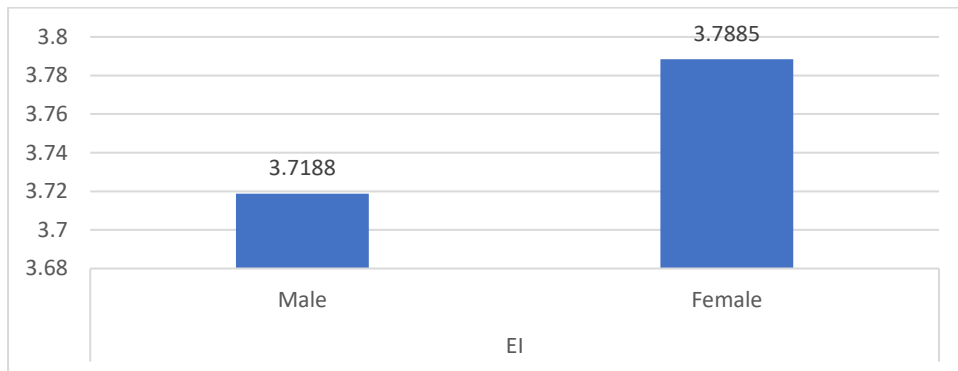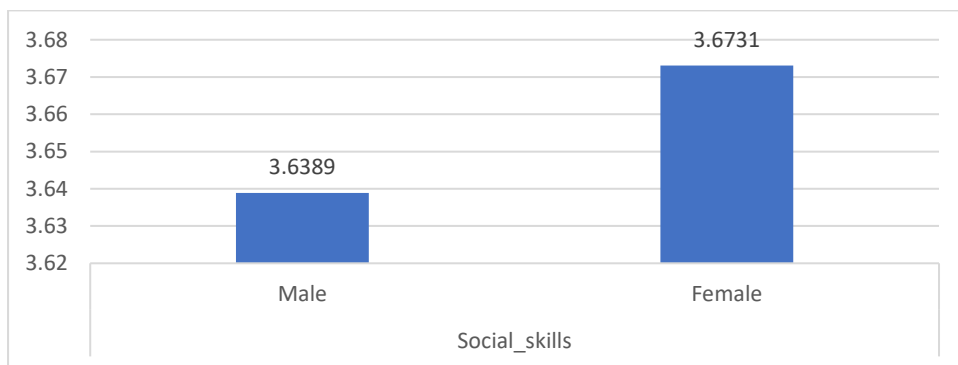
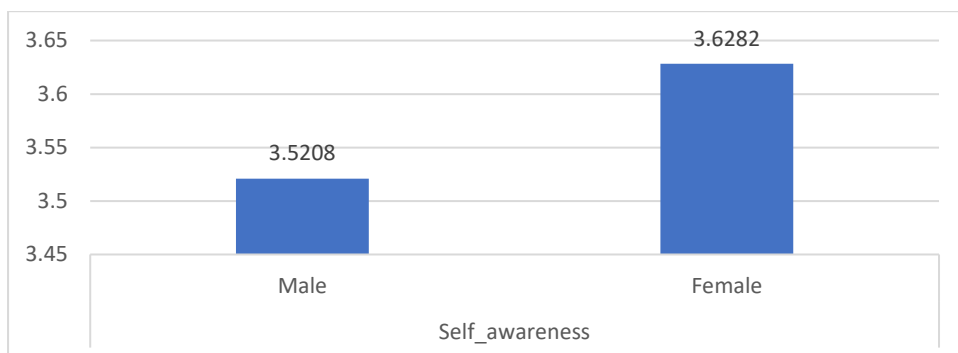Figure 9: Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Figure 10: Social Skills
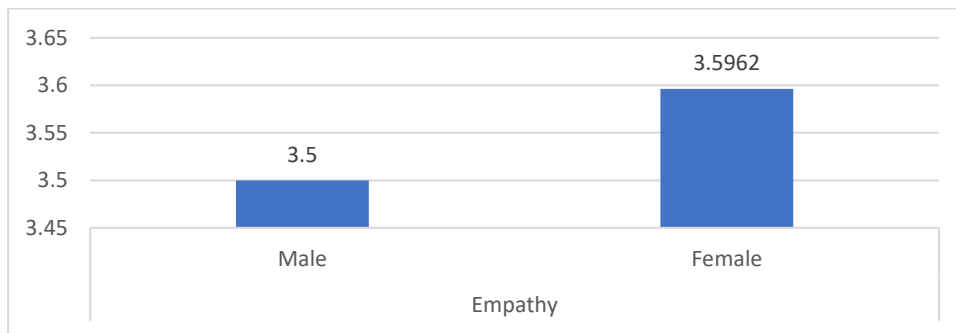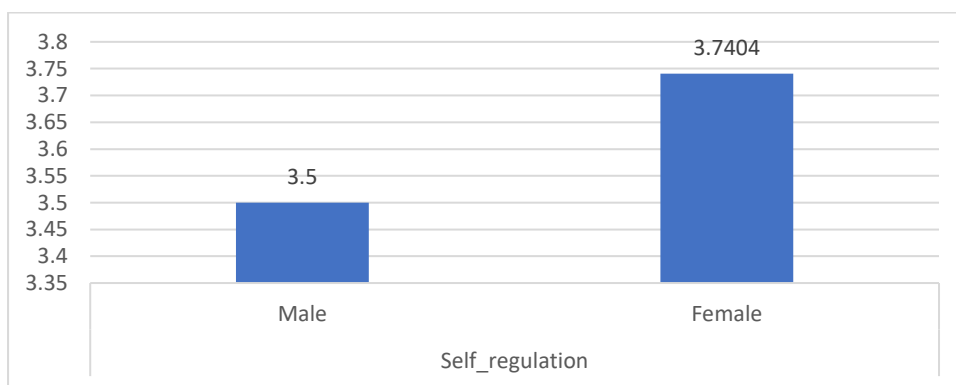

Figure 11: Self - Awareness

Figure 12: Empathy
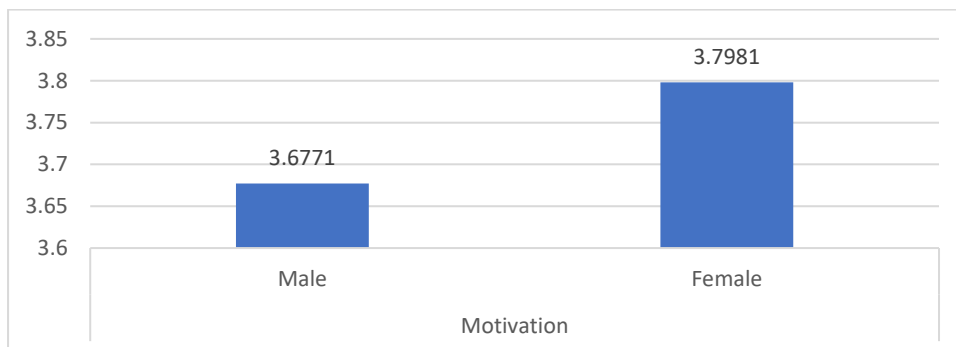

Figure 13: Self - Regulation

Figure 14: Motivation

For EI, females have a slightly higher mean score (3.7885) compared to males (3.7188), but the difference is not meaningful as indicated by the significance value (p=0.658).

In terms of Social Skills, females (mean = 3.6731) marginally outperform males (mean = 3.6389), though the significance value (p=0.777) suggests no substantial difference between the groups. Similarly, for Self-awareness, females have a higher mean score (3.6282) compared to males (3.5208), but this difference is not statistically significant (p=0.348).

For the dimension of Empathy, females again exhibit a slightly higher mean score (3.5962) than males (3.5000). However, the significance value (p=0.492) confirms that this difference is not noteworthy.

When it comes to Self-regulation, females score higher (mean = 3.7404) compared to males (mean = 3.5000). While this difference appears more pronounced than the others, it still does not reach statistical significance (p=0.161).

Lastly, for Motivation, females achieve a higher mean score (3.7981) than males (3.6771). Yet, the significance value (p=0.352) indicates that this difference is not significant.

Findings:

The results of the present study show that, overall, females have higher levels of EI and all its components than males, yet there is no significant difference in EI and its components between male and female management students (i.e. fails to reject the null hypothesis).

Limitation:

This study was conducted exclusively on management (MBA) students of Greater Noida and hence, the findings may not be representative of a larger sample population containing students from different disciplines, institutes or cultural backgrounds.

Recommendations:

➢ Incorporate EI training tailored to gender-inclusive strategies in management programs.
➢ Design gender responsive mentoring systems to address emotional and academic needs.
➢ Implement data driven policy reforms to align EI development with SDG benchmarks for academic equity.

DISCUSSION:

The study's findings reveal an interesting pattern in EI levels between genders. Overall, females tend to show higher EI scores and perform better in all areas of EI compared to males. However, when looking specifically at management students, the difference in EI levels between male and female students is not significant. This means that in the group of management students, both males and females have similar levels of EI. We couldn't find enough evidence to say that one gender had higher EI than the other in this particular group. This result is noteworthy because it suggests that while there might be general differences in EI between genders in the broader population, these differences may not always apply to specific groups or contexts, such as in the field of management education.

CONCLUSION:

The examination of EI from a gender perspective in management students through the lens of SDG, yields interesting findings together with some relevant implications. The differences between genders in EIs are often explained by natural biological, psychological and social reasons. For instance, studies generally show that women do better in the interpersonal and emotional awareness aspects of EI, which some researchers have linked to socialization and care responsibilities. Women, in contrast, are more likely to process stressors internally and become filled with agitated thoughts and worries, while men may be more self-assured and able to handle stressors. But care should be taken in interpreting the findings, given the study's limitations. This will make sure that management students from all spheres of life obtain high quality education, which is a crucial SDG.

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