



Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Empowerment among Educated Women in Balochistan

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and women's empowerment among educated women in Balochistan. The research aimed to determine whether higher levels of emotional intelligence contribute to increased empowerment in social, economic, and personal domains. A quantitative correlational research design was employed, involving 250 educated women from universities, colleges, and professional institutions across Balochistan. Data were collected through standardized instruments: the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) and the Women's Empowerment Scale (WES). Pearson's correlation and regression analyses were conducted using SPSS version 26. Results indicated a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and women's empowerment ($r = .68, p < .001$), revealing that women with higher emotional intelligence demonstrated stronger self-confidence, decision-making ability, and social autonomy. Findings suggested that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in enhancing women's empowerment and can serve as a key psychological factor in policy and educational interventions. The study recommended emotional intelligence training programs for women to promote leadership, self-awareness, and socio-economic participation in Balochistan.



Introduction

Women's empowerment has emerged as a vital indicator of social progress and gender equity in the twenty-first century. It reflects women's ability to make decisions, control resources, and participate meaningfully in political, educational, and economic life (Kabeer, 2019). Despite global advocacy, many regions, including Balochistan, continue to experience gender disparities rooted in cultural norms, limited education, and socio-economic restrictions. Educated women in

Balochistan often face challenges in translating their academic achievements into social or economic empowerment due to cultural barriers and restricted autonomy.

Emotional intelligence (EI) — defined by Salovey and Mayer (1990) as the ability to perceive, understand, and manage one's emotions and those of others — has gained prominence as a psychological construct linked to personal and professional success. Goleman (1995) further emphasized that emotional intelligence contributes to leadership, self-efficacy, and interpersonal effectiveness, which are foundational components of empowerment. In conservative societies such as Balochistan, emotional regulation and social awareness are particularly significant for women navigating traditional expectations and modern aspirations.

Research worldwide has highlighted the relationship between emotional intelligence and empowerment. Studies by Singh and Sharma (2018) and Adeyemo (2019) demonstrated that women with higher emotional intelligence tend to display greater self-confidence, assertiveness, and resilience in decision-making. However, little empirical research has explored this relationship within Pakistan, particularly in Balochistan's socio-cultural context, where educational access for women is limited and empowerment remains constrained by societal norms.

The study, therefore, sought to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and empowerment among educated women in Balochistan. It aimed to understand how emotional intelligence influences women's psychological, social, and economic empowerment and to provide evidence for educational and policy frameworks that strengthen women's leadership and agency in the region.

Literature Review

Emotional Intelligence: Concept and Dimensions

The concept of emotional intelligence (EI) was first introduced by Salovey and Mayer (1990), who defined it as the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's emotions and those of others. Goleman (1995) expanded this definition by identifying five key components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Emotional intelligence has been recognized as a critical factor in personal success, leadership, and social adaptation (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). In educational contexts, emotionally intelligent individuals demonstrate better stress management, interpersonal relationships, and goal achievement (Bar-On, 2006).

Women's Empowerment

Women's empowerment refers to the process by which women gain power, autonomy, and control over resources and decisions that affect their lives (Kabeer, 2019). It encompasses multiple dimensions: economic, social, political, and psychological. The United Nations (2018) emphasized empowerment as essential for achieving gender equality and sustainable development. In Pakistan, however, women's empowerment remains uneven, especially in provinces like Balochistan, where traditional norms and limited educational access restrict women's participation in leadership and decision-making (Aslam, 2020).

Emotional Intelligence and Women's Empowerment

A growing body of literature supports the link between emotional intelligence and women's empowerment. Singh and Sharma (2018) found that emotionally intelligent women displayed greater self-efficacy, leadership, and resilience. Similarly, Adeyemo (2019) reported that emotional regulation contributed to women's psychological empowerment and decision-making confidence. In the South Asian context, Nazir and Khan (2021) observed that emotional awareness and

empathy were strong predictors of women's ability to balance professional and family responsibilities.

Within Pakistan, emotional intelligence has been identified as an enabling factor for women's leadership in education and business (Yasin et al., 2022). However, no prior empirical research has focused on Balochistan, where cultural conservatism often limits expressions of autonomy. Understanding this relationship in Balochistan is essential to inform educational and psychological interventions that support women's personal and professional growth.

Research Gap and Hypotheses

Previous studies have explored emotional intelligence and empowerment separately but seldom in the specific socio-cultural context of Balochistan. This research, therefore, bridges that gap by empirically examining how emotional intelligence contributes to the empowerment of educated women.

Hypotheses:

H₁: There is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and women's empowerment among educated women in Balochistan.

H₂: Emotional intelligence significantly predicts women's empowerment.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative correlational design to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence (independent variable) and women's empowerment (dependent variable). The design was appropriate for measuring the strength and direction of association between psychological and social constructs.

Population and Sample

The population included educated women in Balochistan, such as university students, teachers, and professionals working in education, healthcare, and administration. Using stratified random sampling, a sample of 250 women was selected from major cities, including Quetta, Khuzdar, and Turbat. Participants were aged between 22 and 45 years and held at least a bachelor's degree.

Instruments

Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)

Developed by Schutte et al. (1998), this 33-item scale measures emotional perception, management, and utilization. Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The Cronbach's alpha reliability in the present study was 0.87, indicating strong internal consistency.

Women Empowerment Scale (WES)

Adapted from Malhotra et al. (2002), the WES consisted of 25 items covering decision-making, self-efficacy, social participation, and economic independence. The responses used a 5-point Likert scale. The Cronbach's alpha in this study was 0.83, showing acceptable reliability.

Data Collection Procedure

Permission was obtained from institutional heads before data collection. Questionnaires were distributed personally and through online forms. Respondents were informed of the study's purpose, assured confidentiality, and that participation was voluntary. Data were coded and analyzed using SPSS version 26.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to describe demographic variables. Pearson's correlation tested the relationship between emotional intelligence and empowerment, while simple linear regression examined the predictive power of emotional intelligence. The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

A total of 250 responses were analyzed. Participants' mean age was 31.6 years ($SD = 6.2$). The sample included 42% university teachers, 36% postgraduate students, and 22% professionals in healthcare and administration.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Emotional Intelligence	250	124.3	15.7	85	160
Women's Empowerment	250	102.8	13.2	70	135

The results showed that participants generally reported moderate to high levels of emotional intelligence and empowerment.

Correlation Analysis

A Pearson correlation test was conducted to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and women's empowerment.

Variables	r	p
Emotional Intelligence ↔ Women's Empowerment	0.68	< .001

The results revealed a strong positive correlation ($r = .68$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher emotional intelligence was associated with higher levels of empowerment among educated women in Balochistan.

Regression Analysis

A simple linear regression was applied to examine the predictive power of emotional intelligence on women's empowerment.

Figure 1. Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Empowerment among Educated Women in Balochistan



Regression analysis predicting empowerment among educated women in Balochistan

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Emotional Intelligence	0.58	0.04	0.68	13.9	<.001

$R^2 = 0.46$, $F(1, 248) = 193.2$, $p < .001$

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The model explained 46% of the variance in women's empowerment, indicating that emotional intelligence was a significant predictor of empowerment levels among educated women.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirmed a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and women's empowerment among educated women in Balochistan. Women who demonstrated higher levels of emotional awareness, empathy, and self-regulation were more likely to feel confident, assertive, and autonomous in decision-making.

These findings align with Goleman's (1995) model, which proposed that emotional competencies enable individuals to manage social and personal challenges effectively. Similarly, Singh and

Sharma (2018) found that emotionally intelligent women exhibited stronger leadership and communication abilities. In the Balochistan context, emotional intelligence appears to serve as a psychological buffer that allows educated women to navigate cultural barriers and societal constraints, enhancing their empowerment.

Moreover, the study supports Kabeer's (2019) theoretical framework of empowerment, which emphasizes the acquisition of "resources, agency, and achievements." Emotional intelligence contributes directly to the *agency* component by strengthening self-belief and resilience. These findings indicate that EI development can serve as a strategic tool for women's empowerment in conservative societies.

The strong predictive power of emotional intelligence found in this study also reflects the importance of integrating psychological skills training within educational and professional programs. When women learn to manage emotions, resolve conflicts, and express themselves effectively, they are better equipped to participate in leadership, education, and social decision-making processes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concluded that emotional intelligence significantly contributes to women's empowerment among educated women in Balochistan. Women with higher emotional intelligence demonstrated greater confidence, self-control, and the ability to influence personal and social outcomes. The study's findings emphasize that emotional intelligence should be recognized as a core psychological resource for empowerment.

Recommendations

Integration of Emotional Intelligence Training: Educational institutions and NGOs should incorporate EI skill development into women's leadership and empowerment programs.

Policy Support for Women's Development: Government initiatives in Balochistan should include EI workshops within professional development and adult education frameworks.

Further Research: Future studies could examine how emotional intelligence interacts with socio-economic or cultural variables affecting empowerment.

Practical Application: Counseling centers and universities can use EI-based interventions to strengthen women's confidence, communication, and emotional resilience.

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