

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF ARMED FORCES ASPIRANTS

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Abstract

Emotional or affective aspects of personality play a significant role in determining the success of a leader. The researches on gender differences in emotional aspects reveal inconsistent findings across the culture. The present study was conducted with an aim to assess the gender differences in different aspects of emotionality among the aspirants of the armed forces. The sample of the study consists of 100 male and 100 female technical graduates appearing at Services Selection Board for commission in Indian armed forces. Neuroticism and Extraversion were measured with the help of Neuroticism-Extraversion-Openness Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI, McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T.; 2004) and Emotional Stability Scale (Chaturvedi and Chander, 2010) was used to measure emotional stability on five dimensions i.e. optimism vs pessimism, apathy vs empathy, anxiety vs calm, dependence vs autonomy, and aggression vs control. The obtained scores of male and female aspirants were compared with the help of 't' test on neuroticism, extraversion, pessimism vs optimism, apathy vs empathy, anxiety vs calm, dependence vs autonomy, and aggression vs control. Results indicated statistically significant difference between the male and female aspirants on neuroticism and extraversion, optimism vs pessimism, apathy vs empathy, anxiety vs calm,. The difference on dependence vs autonomy, and aggression vs control was statistically insignificant. The findings are discussed in detail in the light of available literature.

Key words: Gender, emotion

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Introduction

We're born with the capacity to feel deeply, so it's as natural as breathing to experience a range of emotions. Fear and joy and sadness, anger and shame and disgust lie somewhere within each of us. People who recognize stress triggers and build healthy coping skills tend to maintain emotional stability better than those who don't. Irrational thinking, impulsiveness and certain medications contribute to increased levels of emotional instability. Emotional stability enables the person to develop an integrated and balanced way of perceiving the problems of life. This organizational ability and structured perception helps one to develop reality oriented thinking, judgment and evaluation ability. One develops feeling, perception and an attitude to understanding the realities of life and conditions and circumstances that create miserable situations in life. The understanding helps him promote high ego strength.

It is a common and pervasive belief in Western culture that women are “more emotional than men”, in the sense of being more “in touch” with their emotions, more responsive, sensitive, and empathic (e.g., Germans Gard & Kring, 2007; Grossman & Wood, 1993; LaFrance & Banaji, 1992).

The research is mixed regarding the emotional differences between the sexes. Strong evidence has been found that there are differences in the way men and women detect, process, and express emotion. Other studies show that men and women share more emotional similarities than differences.

The issue is difficult to judge because not many authors directly compared measures of experience and measures of expression in men and women and, those who did, reported mixed findings: some found that women were more expressive and also reported to experience more emotion than men (Greenwald, Cook & Lang, 1989; Gross & Levenson, 1993). Cross-country research shows that women are less likely to be emotionally stable and more likely to be extraverts, agreeable, and conscientious. It has been discovered that people exhibit different tendencies toward socialization purely based on their gender. Researcher Eleanor Maccoby's results showed that Women tend to build closer bonds overall, with more affectionate language and lengthy conversations. Men, on the other hand, tend to spend time with friends during

activities or shared professions. While women tend to seek out friends in times of struggle or weakness, men are less likely to share weaknesses or emotional concerns with their friends. Both genders tend to choose friends on the basis of proximity, acceptance, communication, and mutual interests.

Lyne R and Martin T (1997) Mean gender differences on Eysenck's three personality traits of extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism were collated for 37 nations. Women obtained higher means than men on neuroticism in all countries, and men obtained higher means than women on psychoticism in 34 countries and on extraversion in 30 countries.

Further, gender differences are frequently found to be moderated by social context. In a study by Robinson (2009), women scored higher in neuroticism than men only when they judged themselves in regard to situations with their parents whereas no gender differences were evident in regard to situations with their friends or work colleagues. Gender differences in extraversion were not evident for situations with work colleagues, but women reported higher extraversion for situations with parents or friends.

The studies in past report higher optimism among males than females. Jacobsen, Lee and Marquering (2008) in the data collected from 17 countries including US found men to be more optimistic than women in their responses on question pertaining to personal economic future as well as issues pertaining to the economy of state such as economic growth, interest rate, inflation, and perceived future stock marketing risk. Raghbir and Lin (2005) in a study of 497 Taiwanese students found males to be more optimistic and females to be more realistic on issues related to marriage and divorce. The results of a study by Puskar et al (2010) on 193 students from rural Pennsylvania also revealed similar findings.

The studies on anxiety reveal that different anxiety constructs affect males and females in different ways. Results of the study by Stober (2004) show that (a) worry was related to task-orientation and preparation and low avoidance coping in females; (b) emotionality was related to seeking social support in male students and to task-orientation and preparation in female students; and (c) interference was related to avoidance coping in females (d). There was a gender

effect on worry and emotionality on test anxiety for high achieving students. Overall, females were reported to be more subject to test anxiety than males; and females experienced higher worry than emotionality, while males reported little difference between the two dimensions (Everson, Millsap, & Rodriguez, 1991). German and Kringe (2007) carried out a study on the differences between men and women in their patterns of immediate response to emotional stimuli and in their patterns of recovery from these responses. The findings indicated that women were more experientially reactive to negative, but not positive, emotional pictures compared to men, and that women scored higher than men on measure of aversive motivational system sensitivity.

Hosseini and Khazali (2013) Compared the level of anxiety in male and female students using the Reynolds and Richmond's anxiety scale. Lie detector sub-scale was used for taking the valid subjects for data analysis. Results indicated higher levels of physiological anxiety and worry among the female students than their male counterparts.

Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) pointed out two major gender differences; hostility and empathy. With respect to hostility, there was overwhelming evidence that men scored higher than women on most forms of expression of aggression. With respect to empathy, even though women scored higher on this trait than men the evidence was not conclusive. Study by Antill (1983) also provides very strong evidence that women have greater capacity for interpersonal relations and empathy than men. Eisenberg and Lennon (1983) found a large sex difference favoring women when the measure of empathy was self-report scales; moderate differences (favoring females) were found for reflexive crying and self-report measures in laboratory situations; and no sex differences were evident when the measure of empathy was either physiological or unobtrusive observations of nonverbal reactions to another's emotional state. Toussaint and Webb (2005) conducted a study on gender differences on self report measures of empathy and forgiveness on 127 community residents. The findings revealed that the women were more empathic than men. However the empathy was associated with forgiveness in men but not in women.

In the light of above literature the present study was conducted with an aim to study gender differences on various aspects of emotionality i.e. neuroticism, extraversion, optimism, empathy, anxiety, dependence and aggression in Indian context.

Method

Sample- The study was conducted on 200 technical graduates (100 males and 100 females) appearing at services Selection Board for commission in Indian armed forces. The age range varied from 22 to 27 years (M= 22.78). This age group was selected because this is an age when the personality is fully developed. The sample was selected based on the stratified random sampling method.

Tools: (a) Emotional Stability Scale (Chaturvedi, and Chander 2010) was used to measure emotional stability on five dimensions i.e. optimism vs pessimism, apathy vs empathy, anxiety vs calm, dependence vs autonomy, and aggression vs control. It is a 50 item self-administered 5 point rating scale comprising of 10 items from each of the above mentioned dimensions.

The scale can be administered individually as well as in group. The scores range from 5 to 1 for positive items and 1 to 5 for negative items. Hence the minimum score on the scale can be 50 and maximum score can be 250. Higher score indicates higher emotional stability.

(b) Neuroticism and Extraversion subscales of NEO Five-Factor Inventory-3 (NEO-FFI), a shortened version of the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R) were used to measure Neuroticism and Extraversion. It is the 2010 revision of the NEO-FFI with updated norms. The scale comprises of 60 items (12 items per domain). The subjects are required to rate themselves against each item on a five point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Results

Table-I: Comparison of Male and Female Candidates on Neuroticism and Extraversion

Traits		Mean	SD	N	df	t	significance
Neuroticism	Male	22.60	5.43	100	99	12.32	.000
	Female	30.69	5.17	100	99		
Extraversion	Male	48.09	4.46	100	99	.5.844	.000
	Female	44.41	5.60	100	99		

The figures in table-1 indicate a comparison of mean scores of 100 male and 100 female students on Neuroticism and Extraversion. On Neuroticism the mean for males was 22.60 with the mean for females being 30.69. The difference was found to be significant at 0.000 level with the t value of 12.32. On Extraversion mean of males (48.09) is higher than that of females (44.41). The t value (5.844) is significant at 0.000 level.

Table-II: Comparison of Male and Female Candidates on Emotional Stability

Sub Scales	Groups	Mean	SD	N	df	t	Significance
Pessimism VS Optimism	Male	39.40	5.53	100	99	2.24	.027
	Female	37.60	5.67	100	99		
Apathy VS Empathy	Male	30.62	4.37	100	99	2.25	.026
	Female	32.37	6.09	100	99		
Dependence VS Autonomy	Male	37.77	5.97	100	99	1.04	.301
	Female	36.81	7.67	100	99		
Anxiety VS Calm	Male	37.82	5.69	100	99	2.24	.028
	Female	35.87	6.23	100	99		
Aggression VS Control	Male	31.00	6.69	100	99	1.35	.182
	Female	29.81	5.80	100	99		
Total Score	Male	178.36	18.34	100	99	2.595	.011
	Female	170.71	21.51	100	99		

The results in Table 2 indicate a comparison of mean scores of 100 male and 100 female students on various dimensions of Emotional Stability. On Pessimism VS Optimism mean of males (39.40) is higher than that of females (37.60). The t value (2.24) is significant at 0.027 level. On Apathy VS Empathy the mean for males was 30.62 with the mean for females being 32.37. The difference was found to be significant at 0.026 level with the t value of 2.25. The scores on Dependence VS Autonomy did not differ between the two groups. In the Anxiety VS Calm males scored higher (mean=37.82) than females (mean=35.87), with the t value (2.24) being significant at 0.028 level. The mean scores on Aggression VS Control did not reveal a significant difference between the two groups. However the comparison of mean on overall Emotional

Stability score indicated a significantly higher Emotional Stability of males (mean=178.36) than females (mean=170.31), with the t value (2.595) being significant at 0.011 level.

Discussion

Results of the present study indicate female aspirants to be high on neuroticism, whereas male aspirants scored higher on extraversion. Similar findings were observed by Michelangelo (2013) and Lyne R and Martin T (1997). On the dimensions of Emotional Stability male aspirants were more optimistic than female aspirants. Higher optimism among males has also been observed in the studies pertaining to outlook about issues pertaining to personal economic future as well as the economy of state (Jacobsen, Lee and Marquering, 2008), and on issues related to marriage and divorce (Raghubir and Lin, 2005).

The female aspirants revealed higher anxiety than males which confirms the findings of existing literature (Everson, Millsap, & Rodriquez, 1991; Stober, 2004; Hosseini and Khazali 2013). A possible explanation for lesser anxiety among males is that males are more defensive about admitting anxiety because it might be seen as threatening to their masculinity; they are trained to cope with anxiety by denying it or by finding ways to overcome it (Mousavi & Haghshenas & Alishahi, 2008).

The female aspirants scored higher on empathy than the male aspirants. Though it has been a general observation in the studies conducted in past (Antill, 1983; Eisenberg and Lennon, 1983; and . Toussaint and Webb, 2005), variations have been observed in results during self-report measures, non-verbal manifestations and physiological reactions. The scores on autonomy and aggression did not reveal a significant difference between the two groups. The study overrules the existing misnomer of higher aggression in males. The possible reason could be that both have equal amount of aggression but in females it is suppressed and turned inward resulting in higher anxiety, neuroticism and at times self destructive behavior whereas in males it is more of expressed aggression since it is culturally permitted.

Overall Emotional Stability score was higher in males. Several hypothesis have been put forward to account for gender differences including biological differences, differences in early

childhood socialization in same sex playgroups, and the fulfillment of culturally prescribed gender role expectations. The differences in interpersonal processes and motives of males and females may also be related to types of self-schemas (e.g. independent vs. interdependent) that tend to be held by males and females as a group (Cross & Madson, 1997).

Conclusion

Gender differences in emotional expression are the result of a combination of biologically based temperamental predispositions and the socialization of boys and girls to adopt gender-related display rules for emotion expression. Gender stereotype related to emotionality has not changed with the changes in socioeconomic scenario with liberalization of norms and drive towards gender equality. The findings of this study can be useful in Armed Forces at the recruitment, training and the placement as well. Such studies also have important implications for health, education, and psychotherapy.

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