

Association Between Demographic Factors and the Level of Empathy Among Working Women

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Abstract

Empathy is an important dimension of emotional intelligence that enables individuals to understand the feelings, perspectives and emotional needs of others and respond appropriately in interpersonal situations. For working women, empathy assumes particular significance because they interact with colleagues, supervisors, subordinates, customers and family members while managing multiple personal and professional responsibilities. The present study examines the association between selected demographic factors and the level of empathy among working women. The study is based on primary data, and the association between demographic characteristics and empathy was examined using the Chi-square test. The findings reveal statistically significant associations between age group and level of empathy, marital status and level of empathy, family size and level of empathy, and participation in training programmes and level of empathy. However, qualification, gross monthly income, nature of family, years of experience, distance of workplace from residence and mode of transportation do not show statistically significant associations with empathy at the 5 per cent level. The findings highlight that demographic and experiential characteristics may influence the development and expression of empathy among working women. The study suggests that organizations should provide emotional-intelligence and interpersonal-skills training to strengthen empathy and promote healthier workplace relationships.

Keywords: Empathy, Emotional Intelligence, Working Women, Demographic Factors, Workplace Relationships, Chi-square Test, Women Employees

1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence has emerged as an important behavioural competency in contemporary workplaces because employees are required not only to perform technical and functional tasks but also to manage emotions, understand others and maintain effective interpersonal relationships. Among the major dimensions of emotional intelligence, empathy refers to the ability to understand and appropriately respond to the feelings, perspectives and experiences of others. In an organizational environment, empathy can facilitate

communication, cooperation, conflict management, supportive relationships and effective teamwork.

The importance of empathy is particularly relevant to working women because women often perform multiple roles across professional and personal settings. In the workplace, they may have to coordinate with superiors, colleagues, subordinates, customers and other stakeholders while simultaneously managing family responsibilities. Consequently, the ability to recognize and respond to the emotions of others can contribute to interpersonal effectiveness and workplace adjustment.

Recent research has emphasized that workplace empathy is broader than simply experiencing another person's emotions. Hall et al. (2024) found that employees associate workplace empathy with both emotional sensitivity and professional behaviours such as competent task performance, fairness and organizational responsibility. Similarly, Vallette d'Osia and Meier (2024) demonstrated that affective and cognitive dimensions of empathy have different relationships with workplace well-being and prosocial behaviour.

Research focusing specifically on women employees also indicates the relevance of emotional intelligence in managing professional responsibilities. Studies among working women have examined emotional intelligence in relation to occupational status, workplace environment, remote working and organizational systems. These studies suggest that emotional competencies can influence interpersonal relationships and professional effectiveness.

Against this background, the present study concentrates specifically on **empathy as an important dimension of emotional intelligence** and examines whether the level of empathy among working women differs according to selected demographic and employment-related characteristics. Understanding these associations can help organizations design appropriate training and development interventions for women employees.

2. Review of Literature

Basu and Chakraborty (2025) examined emotional intelligence among working women and homemakers from a global perspective. Their study highlighted the challenges associated with balancing professional responsibilities and family expectations among women. The research reinforces the importance of emotional competencies in managing multiple roles and maintaining personal and professional effectiveness. It provides a useful background for examining empathy among working women as one component of emotional intelligence.

Hall et al. (2024) investigated how employees understand empathic behaviour in workplace settings. Across three studies, the researchers identified two major dimensions of workplace empathy: emotional sensitivity and professionalism. Their findings demonstrate that workplace empathy includes not only understanding others' feelings but also behaviours related to fairness, competence, responsibility and organizational functioning. The study therefore supports the view that empathy should be examined within the specific context in which employees work.

Vallette d'Osia and Meier (2024) examined empathy in workplace contexts by distinguishing between affective and cognitive empathy. The study emphasized that empathy is multidimensional rather than a single, uniform characteristic. The authors linked workplace empathy with positive outcomes such as helping behaviour and task performance. Their findings are relevant to the present study because they establish empathy as an important interpersonal competency in organizational settings.

Islmzai (2024) examined the relationship between high-performing work systems and emotional intelligence among working women. The study emphasized that organizational practices can contribute to the development of emotional intelligence among female employees and can support their performance and well-being. It also highlighted the importance of organizational strategies that promote emotional competencies among women employees. The study provides support for examining workplace and demographic factors that may be associated with emotional intelligence and its dimensions.

Shanmugapriya and Gayathri (2025) studied emotional intelligence among women IT employees working from home, with specific attention to self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. The study reported that remote work could improve autonomy and emotional self-regulation for some women while creating challenges in maintaining empathy and social connectivity. These findings underline the continuing importance of empathy in changing workplace environments. The study is particularly relevant to the present research because empathy was considered as an independent dimension of emotional intelligence among women employees.

3 Objectives of the Study

- To study the association between selected demographic factors and the level of empathy among working women.

4. Research Methodology

The study is based on **primary data collected from working women**. The level of empathy was examined in relation to selected demographic and employment-related characteristics.

The Chi-square test of independence was used to determine whether a statistically significant association exists between the demographic variables and the level of empathy.

The level of significance was considered at **5 per cent**, with **1 per cent significance** additionally indicated where applicable.

5. Analysis and Interpretation

Association Between Demographic Factors and Level of Empathy

Demographic Factor	Chi-square Value	p-value	Result
Age group	9.986	0.007**	Significant
Marital status	19.445	0.035*	Significant
Qualification	2.395	0.302	Not significant
Gross monthly income	2.796	0.592	Not significant
Nature of family	6.169	0.405	Not significant
Size of family	8.117	0.017*	Significant
Years of experience	8.054	0.090	Not significant
Training programme attended	13.210	0.040*	Significant
Distance of workplace from residence	1.698	0.428	Not significant
Mode of transportation	5.153	0.524	Not significant

Source: Computed from primary data.

Note: **Significant at 1% level;

*Significant at 5% level.

5.1 Age Group and Level of Empathy

The calculated Chi-square value for the association between **age group and level of empathy is 9.986**, with a p-value of **0.007**. Since the p-value is less than 0.01, the association is statistically significant at the 1 per cent level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that the level of empathy among working women differs significantly across age groups.

5.2 Marital Status and Level of Empathy

The Chi-square value for **marital status and level of empathy is 19.445**, with a p-value of **0.035**. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, a statistically significant association exists between marital status and the level of empathy. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This suggests that the level of empathy varies significantly according to the marital status of working women.

5.3 Qualification and Level of Empathy

The Chi-square value for **qualification and level of empathy** is **2.395**, and the p-value is **0.302**. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the relationship is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. The result indicates that educational qualification does not have a significant association with the level of empathy among working women.

5.4 Gross Monthly Income and Level of Empathy

The Chi-square value for **gross monthly income and level of empathy** is **2.796**, with a p-value of **0.592**. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, there is no statistically significant association between income and empathy. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that variations in monthly income are not significantly associated with the level of empathy among working women.

5.5 Nature of Family and Level of Empathy

The Chi-square value for **nature of family and level of empathy** is **6.169**, with a p-value of **0.405**. As the p-value exceeds 0.05, the association is statistically insignificant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. The result indicates that the nature of family does not significantly influence the level of empathy among working women.

5.6 Size of Family and Level of Empathy

The Chi-square value for **family size and level of empathy** is **8.117**, and the p-value is **0.017**. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, a statistically significant association exists. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that the level of empathy differs significantly according to the size of the family of working women.

5.7 Years of Experience and Level of Empathy

The Chi-square value for **years of experience and level of empathy** is **8.054**, with a p-value of **0.090**. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the association is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that years of work experience do not have a statistically significant association with the level of empathy among working women.

5.8 Training Programme Attended and Level of Empathy

The Chi-square value for **training programme attended and level of empathy** is **13.210**, with a p-value of **0.040**. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the association is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This suggests that participation in training programmes is significantly associated with the level of empathy among working women.

5.9 Distance of Workplace from Residence and Level of Empathy

The Chi-square value for **distance of workplace from residence and level of empathy** is **1.698**, with a p-value of **0.428**. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the association is not statistically significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Distance between workplace and residence is therefore not significantly associated with the level of empathy.

5.10 Mode of Transportation and Level of Empathy

The Chi-square value for **mode of transportation and empathy** is **5.153**, with a p-value of **0.524**. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, there is no statistically significant association. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. The mode of transportation used by working women does not significantly influence their level of empathy.

6. Major Findings

The major findings of the study are as follows:

1. **Age group has a significant association with empathy** among working women at the 1 per cent level ($\chi^2 = 9.986$; $p = 0.007$).
2. **Marital status has a significant association with empathy** at the 5 per cent level ($\chi^2 = 19.445$; $p = 0.035$).
3. **Educational qualification has no significant association** with empathy ($\chi^2 = 2.395$; $p = 0.302$).
4. **Gross monthly income has no significant association** with empathy ($\chi^2 = 2.796$; $p = 0.592$).
5. **Nature of family has no significant association** with empathy ($\chi^2 = 6.169$; $p = 0.405$).
6. **Family size has a significant association** with empathy at the 5 per cent level ($\chi^2 = 8.117$; $p = 0.017$).
7. **Years of experience has no significant association** with empathy ($\chi^2 = 8.054$; $p = 0.090$).
8. **Training programme participation has a significant association** with empathy ($\chi^2 = 13.210$; $p = 0.040$).
9. **Distance between workplace and residence has no significant association** with empathy ($\chi^2 = 1.698$; $p = 0.428$).
10. **Mode of transportation has no significant association** with empathy ($\chi^2 = 5.153$; $p = 0.524$).

Overall, four demographic/employment characteristics—age, marital status, family size and training programme participation—show significant associations with the level of empathy among working women.

7. Conclusion

Empathy represents an important interpersonal dimension of emotional intelligence and has considerable relevance to the professional experiences of working women. The present study examined the association between selected demographic characteristics and the level of empathy among working women using the Chi-square test.

The findings demonstrate that age, marital status, family size and participation in training programmes are significantly associated with the level of empathy. In contrast, educational qualification, gross monthly income, nature of family, years of experience, distance of workplace from residence and mode of transportation do not show statistically significant associations with empathy.

The findings suggest that empathy among working women cannot be explained solely by educational or economic characteristics. Personal life circumstances, age-related experiences and opportunities for training and development may play a more meaningful role. The significant association with training participation is particularly important for organizations because emotional intelligence competencies can be incorporated into employee development programmes.

Organizations should therefore consider incorporating empathy development, active listening, interpersonal communication, conflict management and emotional-intelligence training into women employee development programmes. Such initiatives can strengthen workplace relationships, improve cooperation and contribute to a supportive organizational environment. Future research may examine the relationship between empathy and other outcomes such as job performance, work-life balance, leadership effectiveness, job satisfaction and employee well-being.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research paper is published through the VI Cycle Seed Money Grant provided by Nallamuthu Gounder Mahalingam College, Pollachi.

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