Study of emotional skills in a sample of students and workers

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study is to assess the levels of emotional intelligence (EI) and emotional competencies according to gender in a sample comprising working adults and of undergraduate college students and to analyze gender divergence from the distinct angles of EI and emotional competencies.

Design/methodology: T-test analysis is applied to determine the differences between scores for men and women in each of the sub-samples. Self-report instruments were administered to determine the levels of EI and emotional competencies in a sample of 102 working adults from different companies in Latin America, and 378 college undergraduate students from San Francisco de Quito University in Ecuador. The evaluation of EI was measured using the short version of the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue-SF) in Spanish, as developed by Pérez (2003) and the evaluation of self-regulation competencies was measured using Measurement of Affective Regulation Styles – MARS (Páez et al., 2014).

Findings: First, detailed analysis of the variables for the working adult's sample showed that the highest score belongs to the total measurement of affective regulation styles (MARS) scale. Second, in connection with the different facets of TEIQue-SF, the highest was emotionality (43.245), while the lower score was related to adaptability (11.362). Analysis of the working adult's sample by gender showed no compelling discrepancy between males and females in terms of emotional competencies and EI. However, it is worth noting that men showed slightly higher scores for adaptability than women. Results for the students' sample showed that the self-control appears to be higher in men than in women, suggesting that men show a model of greater emotional control than women who participated in the study. This finding contrasts with the competencies and skills evaluated with the MARS instrument, which reported women achieving higher scores than men.

Originality/value: This study contributes to research on EI traits and EI competencies as well as attempting to close a gap in the literature regarding this topic from a gender perspective. The analysis sheds additional light on the topic by addressing the differences in EI traits and competencies between male and female working adults and university students. Finally, this study contributes to the research on the impact of EI in the workplace and in academic environments.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Competencies, Gender, Trait, State

Jel Codes: M10, M12

1. Introduction

Organizations and schools are places where human beings interact and bring their talents, abilities, and knowledge to achieve a common purpose. These interactions involve the expression of emotions. After many years in which there was a lack of research on how the effect of emotions in the workplace and on academic performance was, the 1990s gave rise to the "affective revolution" (Barsade, 2003), whereby the study of emotions emphasized their importance as an integral component of both the workforce and academic performance.

It is essential to understand what emotional competencies should be taught at the university level to encourage successful performance for working adults in either a university or a work environment. It is also essential to understand students' and employees' motivations, learning patterns, and achievement process over time. Thus, universities and workplaces are essential for the development and practice of EI (Beilock & Ramirez, 2011; Pekrun & Schults, 2007).

This study contributes to the existing literature and research on EI and emotional competencies at universities and in the workplace by analyzing the differences in EI and emotional competencies in a sample of university students and working adults. The study examines the difference between genders per the facets of EI and the ability to self-regulate according to emotional competencies. In addition, the study assesses the extent to which EI competencies may affect academic and job performance.

There are limitations to what we know about the role emotions play in university and workplace environments (Ashkanasy, Hartel & Zerbe, 2000; Bisquerra & Filella, 2018). Different authors, in different disciplines such as psychology, social psychology, marketing, neuroscience, and affective science have studied emotions in both environments. The literature from recent years shows that emotions are involved in many psychological, biological, and social processes (Martins, Ramalho & Morin, 2010; Oatley et al., 2007). Ashkanasy (2018) explain that emotions are an essential aspect of cooperation. University students and employees in the workplace who understand their own emotions and the emotions of others tend to perform at a higher level.

This study seeks to advance the findings concerning university students' and working adults' abilities to emotionally self-regulate and use different facets of EI. The findings can add value to educational institutions and organizations seeking to improve workforce development in the area of soft skills necessary for success (Andrews & Higson, 2008). A review of the existing literature shows significant gaps regarding emotional competencies among university students and working adults alike. Studies conducted in recent decades show that emotions are more relevant at both the academic and workplace levels (for example, Goleman, 1995; Gross, 2015).

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Differences in EI and emotional competencies in a sample of working adults and university students

Organizational leaders recognize the need to incorporate training in EI in universities to ensure that students and future professionals are ready for the workforce and subsequent promotion (Abraham, 2006; Jordan & Lawrence, 2009; Daud, Abidin, Sapuan & Rajadurai, 2010; Duygulu, Hicdurmaz & Akyar, 2011; Kidwell, Hardesty, Murtha & Sheng, 2011; Mo & RJ, 2007). For example, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (Adams, 2014) considers intrapersonal, interpersonal, and leadership as well as teamwork and collaboration as essential competencies that employers seek when hiring graduates. Some universities that are

already teaching EI skills and competencies into their business and technology discipline curriculum are Galveston College, Tshwane University of Technology, Air University, and McLenna Community College (Love, 2014).

Other studies suggest that EI can be crucial to quality management and increased productivity in the workplace (Fernández, 2011; López, 2013). Drory and Meisler (2016) defend the importance of working on emotional management to reduce counterproductive behaviors such as intimidation, pressure, gossip, aggression, verbal/physical abuse, and withdrawal, all of which affect job satisfaction, turnover, task performance and organizational behavior in general. Dealing with people's behaviors more consciously requires emotional competencies and ignoring or suppressing negative or aggressive feelings and emotions can be counterproductive. For example, studies have shown that repeated suppression of intense negative emotions can be responsible for producing a toxic effect and emotional reactions among employees (Maitlis & Ozcelik, 2004).

Trait Emotional Intelligence (Trait EI) introduced by Petrides and Furnham in 2001, is a theoretical framework on which this study is based. It stipulates the emotion-related self-perceptions with regard to the ability of every individual to recognize, understand, manage, and use their own and other people's emotions to adapt and create well-being (Petrides, Sanchez-Ruiz, Siegling, Saklofske & Mavroveli, 2018). This study also explores the levels of emotional competencies among university students and working adults. Emotional competence refers to the ability to manage emotional information constructively (Buck, 1990, 2014). It is worth noting that the term "emotional competence" has been utilized and adapted as a construct encompassing different emotion-related skills such as emotion regulation, emotion awareness, and emotional self-efficacy enabling the individual to manage emotions (Davis, Morningstar, Dirks & Qualter, 2020).

With regard to workplace performance, working adults that exhibit high levels of EI tend to use emotional competencies to manage conflict and stress and receive better peer and/or supervisor ratings. In addition, being able to manage interpersonal facilitation and stress tolerance demonstrates a tendency toward leadership potential (Lopes, Grewal, Kadis, Gall & Salovey, 2006). When looking at EI and emotional competencies among college students and how these competencies influence academic performance, students benefit because they are better able to prioritize work, get organized and manage feelings in challenging situations, such as taking standardized tests. Factors such as intrapersonal abilities, interpersonal skills, adaptability, and stress management lead to academic success (Rozell, Pettijohn & Parker, 2002). The ability to recognize, use, and manage emotions have also been shown to improve student health and well-being (Palmer & Brown, 1998).

Based on the above arguments, our first hypothesis emerges:

> *Hypothesis 1: there are differences in the ability of university students and working adults to self-regulate emotions.*

2.2. Gender differences in facets of emotional competencies and EI traits

Because human capital is central to an organization's survival, it is vital to understand and embrace the heterogeneous nature of the workforce (Oyewunmi, 2018). More complicated is the scientific evidence regarding emotional competencies and gender. So far, there is no agreement in the scientific literature on whether there are fundamental differences between men and women in terms of EI and emotional competencies, with results being quite divergent.

Some authors argue that women generally demonstrate higher scores for empathy and lower scores for problem-solving than men (Extremera, Durán & Rey, 2007; Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006; Tapia & Marsh, 2006), while others observe significant differences in the overall EI score, indicating that men score higher in self-control (Petrides & Furnham, 2000). However, others have not detected differences between gender and have universally applied the concept of EI to men and women in the same way (for example, Aquino, Grover, Goldman & Folger 2003; Bar-On, 1997; Brackett & Mayer, 2003; Goleman, 1998).

The literature on EI and emotional competencies in the work environment is minimal, especially when establishing differences in the characteristics of both constructs according to gender. Many disciplines consider

the influence of gender on the labor market. For instance, Lamas (2000) speaks of gender as a cultural approach to creating a differentiation. According to Sánchez and Delicado (2007), gender indicates biological differences that reflect differences in cultural and social characteristics associated with biological aspects, and the labor market reflects the economic and social consequences of gender inequalities (Sánchez-Sellero, Martínez-Filgueira & Sánchez-Sellero, 2015).

Taking into account the preceding arguments, our second hypothesis is articulated as follows:

Hypothesis 2: There are differences between genders within the different facets of EI traits.

2.3. Assess whether emotional intelligence competencies affect job and academic performance

Emotional competencies are fundamental for improving academic performance and the prevention of conflict (Gorostiaga, Balluerka & Soroa, 2014). This has also been found in the workplace, whereby better emotional management reduces conflict, generating higher pro-social behavior, well-being, and, therefore, better work performance and motivation (Fernández, 2011; López, 2013).

There are many cognitive and behavioral self-regulation strategies that can help to change either the situation or the emotion. In the academic field, the evidence indicates that better emotional regulation improves well-being and adaptability, which improves academic performance and satisfaction with the tasks to be performed (Marroquín, Tennen & Stanton, 2017; Putwain, Loderer, Gallard & Beaumont., 2019).

Studies conducted in recent decades show that greater relevance is being attributed to the fact that emotions impact both academic and work level performance (Goleman, 1995; Gross, 2015). This, together with the evolution and complexity of the workplace, fosters the idea that the employee is the most significant capital of an organization, and that the emotional well-being of workers generates more benefits for both company and for employee (in terms of personal development) alike (Geraerts, 2018).

Following this logic, our last hypothesis is formulated as shown below:

Hypothesis 3: Emotional intelligence competencies have an impact on job and academic performance.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

This study included working adults and college students as samples due to the lack of research on how employees and university students manage their emotions and the effect of EI in the workplace and academic performance. Contemporary research calls attention to the significance of EI in the workplace and on academic performance in terms of leadership, negotiation, emotional labor, conflict resolution, and stress (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002; Fulmer & Barry, 2004; Humphrey, 2002, 2006; Jordan & Troth, 2002; Humphrey, 2008). This study contrasts the levels of EI and the ability to self-regulate among working adults and college students as well as the differences between males and females in various facets of EI. The study also examines the influence EI on workplace and academic performance. The measurement of data from both samples contributes to the research of EI in the work and academic environments.

Sampling for this study was not focused on a specific industry, sector, or country; therefore, a diverse sample was possible. The participation of people from different cultures presented potential cultural bias, which was considered in the analysis. This study is not biased towards a specific group of people and used the TEIQue-SF and MARS scales in Spanish, which is the common language of the participants.

The study utilizes two samples: a group of professionals working for different companies in different countries in Latin America (Ecuador, Panamá, Chile, and Bolivia) and a group of undergraduate students from Universidad San Francisco de Quito-Ecuador pursuing their final two years of college.

Selection of the participants in the employee sample was achieved through communication between the researchers and either the CEO, president, general manager, human resources manager, or director of the companies involved. The researchers exchanged emails and telephone conversations to determine the company's voluntary interest in being a part of the study. Once each company confirmed interest, the companies selected one person within each department of the organization to act as the liaison. The liaison was then tasked with disseminating the invitation to take part in the study to employees under their direction. The invitation explained the goals of the investigation (concerning the analysis of the impact of EI in the workplace and the differences between male and female self-regulation abilities).The invitation also clarified voluntary participation. To control differences between early and late respondents, the invitation email indicated a time frame of two weeks to respond. The response rate in the employee group was 35.66%. The final sample included 102 professionals: 48 men (47.1%) and 54 women (52.9%). The population's average age was 40.3 years, with a standard deviation of 9.48 points.

The selection of student participants was initiated with a communication process between the researchers and the dean of each school. This required exchanging emails and telephone conversations to determine the university's voluntary interest in taking part in the study. When each dean had confirmed their interest, then they contacted their students via email. The invitation to participate in the study indicated that the goal with the sample of students was to determine the level of EI among students pursuing the last two years of studies and to use this information as part of the research linked to exploring the differences in EI and emotional competencies in a sample of working adults and university students. The invitation also indicated that it was based on voluntary participation. To control differences between early and late respondents, the email invitation indicated a time frame of two weeks to respond. The response rate for the student's group was of 22%.

The final sample of university students who participated in the study was 378, of which 171 were men (45.2% of the total), while the remaining 207 subjects being women (54.8%). The average age of the students was 21.96 years, with a standard deviation of 3.41. The students who responded to the survey belonged to different schools within the University: School of Business Administration and Economy (22.5%), School of Sciences and Engineering (18.3%), School of Jurisprudence (16.4%), School of Architecture and Design (9.5%), School of Biological Sciences and Environment (8.5%), School of Music (7.7%), School of Health Sciences (5%), School of Hospitality and Culinary Arts (4.5%), School of Communication (2%), and School of Social Sciences (0.3%). There were 5.3% of the students who did not specify their school.

3.2. Instruments

The aim was to assess the levels of EI trait and emotional competencies in a sample of employees and undergraduate college students according to gender. The study used two instruments: the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire - TEIQue (Petrides & Furnham, 2001; Petrides & Furnham, 2003) in the reduced version prepared by Pérez (2003) in Spanish, and the Measurement of Affective Regulation Styles - MARS (Páez et al., 2014). These instruments measure people's self-awareness ability (TEIQue) and self-regulation strategies (MARS), which are in alignment with the study's goals and hypotheses.

The TEIQue measures EI as a personality trait positioned at the lower levels of personality hierarchies (Petrides, Pita & Kokkinaki, 2007) and is applicable in all areas of life in which emotions are pertinent: in this study, academic and job performance. The TEIQue has two versions: the extended version, which consists of 153 items, 15 facets, and four factors, and the short version, which is a self-report inventory that evaluates global trait EI. This has 30-items and assesses four factors: well-being, self-control, emotionality, and sociability plus two independent facets: self-motivation and adaptability. The global score gives a snapshot of the general emotional functioning (Petrides & Furnham, 2001); it is an index that measures an individual's perceived ability to understand, process, and utilize emotion-related information.

According to trait emotional intelligence theory, this knowledge is central and essential because it influences how an individual relates to life, which generates the individual's reality; as the person changes their viewpoint, their reality changes. The well-being factor indicates the overlap of three facets: happiness, optimism, and self-esteem.

Self-control reflects the overlap of emotion regulation, impulse control, and stress management. The emotionality factor comprises emotion expression, emotion perception, empathy, and relationships; finally, the sociability factor shows assertiveness, emotion management, and social awareness.

Other versions of the TEIQue are available: TEIQue complete form (displays psychometric properties), TEIQue 360 and TEIQue360°-SF (two tests that researchers use for constructing rated trait EI profiles), TEIQue-AFF (designed for adolescents aged13-17), TEIQue-ASF (simple version of the tool that tests adolescents), and TEIQue-CF (primarily determines emotion-related levels of children's personalities). Because the study was conducted in Latin America, the most appropriate instrument for our purposes was the TEIQue-SF in Spanish.

The Measurement of Affective Regulation Styles (MARS), which is based on a competency approach to emotional skills, was used to test items of anger and sadness. This self-report measure has 32 items that gathers different regulatory strategies; some cognitive, others behavioral, directed to change either the situation or the emotion. Humans are continually trying to influence their emotional state, looking to change what is perceived as unfavorable and enhance what is perceived as positive (Larsen & Prizmic, 2004). This study examined the self-regulation's strategies in both samples as well as their level of self-awareness; for this reason, both the TEIQue and MARS scales were used.

The participants (employees and students) answered the MARS questionnaire using a Likert scale where 1=*maximum disagreement* and 7=*maximum agreement*. There were 56 items that evaluated emotional regulation through different strategies and components. In terms of reliability, the Cronbach alpha index was 0.90, which indicates excellent internal consistency. The internal consistency of MARS was α = 88, which can be considered satisfactory. They also responded to the TEIQue-SF's four evaluable facets (well-being, self-control, emotionality, and sociability).

3.3. Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis was conducted using t-test analysis for independent samples using the IBM SPSS version 24 software.

4. Results

To examine the EI-trait, descriptive analysis of the study variables for the sample of workers was performed. Table 1 shows the minimum and maximum scores for each questionnaire as well as the average, minimum and maximum scores, and the standard deviation of the EI facets in the case of the TEI-Que-SF. In addition, it shows that among working adults, the MARS scale produced the highest score in the maximum column, where the respondents indicated how frequently they used each behavior to influence their feelings to increase a positive mood or reduce negative feelings.

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Median	DT
Age	19	64	40.3	0.939
TeiQUE	121	192	158.206	1.719
Sociability	18	37	29.009	0.388
Self-motivation	5	14	11.412	0.229
Adaptability	7	14	11.362	0.207
Self-Control	17	42	30.774	0.522
Emotionality	26	56	43.245	0.671
Wellness	26	40	32.402	0.314
MARS Total	108	214	159.333	0.472

Table 1. Descriptive scores of the full sample of working adults (n=102)

There were no significant differences in terms of gender for any of the facets of the EI traits or emotional competencies in the group of employees, suggesting that there are no crucial differences in self-regulation between the genders among working adults. These results align with studies such as Aquino et al. (2003) and

Brackett and Mayer (2003), who suggest that the concept of EI and emotional management is similar between men and women and that any differences might be due to the different ways that men and women are expected to express their emotions at work (Echebarria-Echabe, 2010).

Scales	Gender		F	p
	Women (N=207)	Men (N=171)		
TEIQue:				
Sociability	26.31	26.59	2.23	0.546
Self-motivation	9.24	9.8	0.21	0.52
Adaptability	9.85	10.26	2.99	0.166
Self-control	25.26	28.38	0.27	0
Emotionality	37.47	36.69	0.82	0.28
Wellness	27.93	27.8	1.68	0.196
MARS Total Scale	175.53	169.24	3.9	0.049

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the full sample of students (n = 378) according to gender

Tables 2 shows the average TEIQue and MARS scores obtained from the student sample. Table 2 shows that female students obtained a higher score than males in the emotionality facet (women 37.47 and men 36.69), which reflects that their level of empathy is slightly higher than male students. The lowest score in the TEIQue-SF test in both cases is self-motivation (women 9.24; men 9.8). According to the results obtained in this study, the well-being factor, which encompasses self-esteem, optimism, and happiness facets, is low for both women and men. Men show a slightly higher percentage. A low score when taking the TEIQue-SF test could suggest that participants maybe dealing with other concerns in their life. Through the lens of trait emotional intelligence theory, it is essential to consider not only the well-being facet but also hidden psychological mechanisms.

Table 2 also demonstrates how the self-control scale appears to be significantly higher for men (28.38) than for women (25.26), which suggests that at the trait level, the men in the samples show a pattern of greater emotional control than women. When comparing Table 1 (working adults) with Table 2 (students), the working adults obtained a higher score than students in the facet of emotionality (43.245). Adults obtained a lower score in adaptability (11.362).

The results obtained in this study suggests that there are differences in emotional competencies and the level of EI between working adults and college students. Moreover, higher levels of self-control in both male working adults and male students suggests that males in general may have a greater competence in the areas of regulation of emotion, impulse control, and stress management.

Questionnaire	Mean	t	SD	p
TEIQue Sociability	28.907	4.318	0.078	0.781
	29.125	3.461		
TEIQue Self-Motivation	11.648	2.181	1.196	0.277
	11.145	2.458		
TEIQue Adaptability	11.018	2.21	3.162	0.078
	11.75	1.907		
TEIQue Self-Control	30.351	5.028	0.734	0.394
	31.25	5.56		
TEIQue Emotionality	43.814	6.44	0.81	0.37
	42.604	7.145		
TEIQue-SF Total	158.185	17.662	0	0.99
	158.229	17.216		
MARS Total	163.166	27.611	2.751	0.1
	155.02	21.083		

Note. MARS = Measurement of extended emotional regulation styles in anger and sadness; TEIQue-SF = Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Form. p ≤ .05

Table 3. Descriptive and T-test analysis of the sample scores for female and male working adults

Table 3 shows the standard deviation, *p* value, and significance, resulting from a t-test analysis of female and male employees to compare variances. The results indicate no significant differences in the facets of EI, sociability, self-motivation, adaptability, and self-control scores between male and female working adults. Even so, it should be noted that the adaptability facet, understood as the flexibility and willingness to adapt to new conditions, shows a certain tendency toward males having higher scores than females (males 11.75; females 11.018). These results could suggest that males may have a greater adaptability to environmental changes compared with females. There are slight differences in the facet of emotionality between male (42.604) and female (43.814) employees. Finally with the competencies evaluated by the MARS instrument, there are statistically significant differences between males and females with the higher scores attributed to females (females 163.166; males 155.02).

5. Discussion

The objective of this study was threefold: (1) to analyze differences in EI among working adults and university students; (2) to analyze the ability to recognize emotions and self-regulate according to gender; and (3) to assess the impact of EI competencies on job and academic performance. It was revealed that the MARS scale offered higher scores than the TEI-Que scale despite using a similar metric. When comparing the results of both instruments between working adults and university students, the results suggest that working adults exhibited higher emotional competencies than college students. Adults showed a greater ability to recognize emotion and to self-regulate. When examining the different factors of the TEIQue test, the highest value was emotionality. This shows that working adults are more capable of perceiving and expressing emotion, empathy, and building stronger relationships. College students, who are still developing their emotional awareness, show less awareness of EI.

By examining the different factors and facets of EI—sociability, self-motivation, adaptability, and self-control—in more detail, the results show that working adults scored low in the facet of adaptability, which may indicate some difficulty in how they perceive themselves on how well they adapt to new situations and new people and how willing they are to accept new conditions in their environment. This finding might suggest that working adults have acquired habits that they find difficult to change. Second, when analyzing the results of working adults by gender, males showed a greater ability to adjust to the changing environment than females but a higher degree of regulating emotions, handling stress, impulse control, and setting deadlines. In general, there does not appear to be any marked differences between genders.

When analyzing the college student's samples, males exhibited a greater ability to manage pressure, change, and adapt easier than females, suggesting that men show greater emotional control than women in college (of those who participated in the study). The trait level self-control scale appears significantly higher among men than in women. These results are in line with the work of Petrides and Furnham (2000), creators of the TEI-Que instruments, who advocate that men usually exhibit higher levels of emotional control than women. This fact also implies an excellent concurrent and internal validity of the administered instrument.

However, these findings contrast with the competencies and skills evaluated with the MARS instrument, which reported that women achieved higher scores than men. The results also revealed that female college students were slightly more capable of empathizing, building relationships with others, and perceiving and expressing their emotions than male college students. Interestingly, the results also showed that both male and female college students need to improve their drive and desire to achieve and produce high-quality work.

After analyzing the results, the study revealed that the MARS showed the highest scores belonging to women. Existing research and a review of the literature suggests that the changes detected between men and women seem to be more relative to the available resources to control negative emotions. In highly emotional situations, women tend to be more agile in choosing an active and valid strategy for a given moment. If they have a higher number of strategies, women can better regulate emotion, despite having a trait basis that could indicate otherwise. Consistent with previous studies women tend to show greater flexibility in combining strategies and adapting to a specific situation (Cheng, 2001). This fact may indicate that the detected changes may be due to the

maturity of men and women at different vital moments, as suggested by some authors (for example, Schirda, Valentine, Aldao & Prakash, 2016). In addition, it would be advisable to conduct further investigation to detect whether these distinctions are due to the current emotional state of participants and what they may be going through at a particular moment when participating in a study of this type.

6. Concluding remarks and limitations

This study shows that companies and educational institutions should go beyond practices that consider only tangible assets as their priority. The first conclusion of this study indicates that college students would benefit from developing and cultivating their EI competencies such as self-awareness, self-control, self-motivation, empathy, and building solid relationships with professors, classmates, and the entire university community, which would benefit students when they become valuable employees in the workplace.

The second conclusion of the study is that there are still gaps in the literature on EI: (1) there is disagreement on the level of influence of EI and emotional competencies in work and academic performance; (2) it is unclear whether there is a difference in the level of EI and emotional competencies in males and females, although some of the data in this study suggest that there is; and (3)it is also apparent that EI is likely to impact job and academic performance.

This study and the results of the analysis adds to the current body of knowledge through a series of perspectives that assess the relationship between job performance, academic performance, level of EI and emotional intelligence competencies in college students and professionals. According to studies mentioned in the theoretical framework of this paper, training programs related to developing EI skills (like self-awareness, self-management, empathy, and social skills) facilitate both job and academic performance. This study suggests that universities should offer courses related to EI formation, to facilitate the awareness of future professionals. This study also suggests that companies create and establish policies that promote continuous training in EI. The results of this study recommend that human resources departments and managers establish specific policies and schedule EI training according to the needs identified at the organizational level.

It is necessary to add that this work is not without limitations. First, the samples are not equivalent in number and characteristics. It should also be considered that this study did not explore the underlying mechanisms that could explain the differences detected in EI between males and females. For this reason, it would be of interest to carry out future studies that include other longitudinal evaluations to assess the effect of trainings in EI, the degree of maturation (age or experience), or the possible changes in emotional competencies of males and females due to outside factors. Because this study is not a transversal study, it is not possible to conclude whether EI competencies influence job and academic performance. Job and academic performance results are commonly reflected in the long term and there are also other variables that have an influence.

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