

## ***Is emotional intelligence only for women? An empirical study.***

### **INTRODUCTION.**

This study tests the existence of significant gender differences with respect to EQ. Traditionally, women's brains have been considered more empathic, but it is difficult to know whether these conclusions are biased by culture or by the way men and women have been historically educated.

In the 1980s, Howard Gardner, from the Theory of Multiple Intelligences (Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences, 1983), proposed different types of intelligence and presented intelligence as a capacity that we can acquire and develop during the course of life. A concept that differed, at that time, from the idea of intelligence as a merely intellectual factor. Two of the 8 intelligences proposed by Gardner are interesting for this study: intrapersonal intelligence and interpersonal intelligence. These two intelligences form the basis of the current concept of EI. The pioneers in naming EI were Salovey and Mayer (1990), although it was not until Daniel Goleman (1995), who, through his best seller, popularized the concept of EI. Goleman follows Gardner's line and also presents EI as an ability.

Mayer and Salovey (1997) decided to propose an EI Skills Model in which EI is shown as a skill and can be learned through practice. This would mean that all people can develop it if they train it. In the past, men did not practice the skill of emotional intelligence, only women did. For this reason, if emotional intelligence can be practiced, it could be developed in the same way in both women and men. Therefore, this study raises the following question: Does EI have a gender? Well, it seems that during the first studies on EI, many of the authors tried to demonstrate the existing differences around gender. Over the years, women have been stereotyped as the more 'emotional' sex (Grewal and Salovey, 2006) and society has become accustomed to seeing a woman express her feelings. Culturally, men have been educated from a model of avoidance in terms of emotional expression (Brody and Hall, 1993), all of which has maintained the stereotype that the female gender is the more emotional one.

The general objective of this study is to find out if there are gender differences in emotional intelligence. After reviewing studies on EI and gender, it is difficult to know if these conclusions have been biased by culture and by the way in which men and women have historically been educated. Nowadays, culture is changing and education is more egalitarian, so based on an equal education for men and women, are there still differences in EI? For this reason, and as a hypothesis, this study proposes that there are currently no significant differences between men and women, since it is considered that these differences are no longer meaningful. For this purpose, the theoretical model of Emotional Intelligence Skills of Mayer and Salovey (1997) will be followed, by which it is understood that EI can be practiced by any person.

Some of the most current studies on EI and gender, such as that of Agulló, Barberá Ramos and Sarrió on 'Emotional intelligence and the gender variable', find that there are no differences in emotional intelligence between men and women, which would contradict the popular belief that women are more in touch with emotions. On the other hand, after the results of Fernández-Berrocal, Cabello, Castillo and Extremera: 'Gender differences in emotional intelligence: The mediating effect of age', they found that the gender differences initially found in EI were due more to the age factor than to the gender variable.

## **METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS.**

The sample of this study consisted of 98 people, 66 of whom were women and 33 men, all residents of Spain. The instrument used was the Spanish version of the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS; Wong and Law, 2002). It is a self-report of emotional intelligence based on the theoretical framework of Mayer and Salovey (1997). In addition, the IBM SPSS 20.0 Statistics computer application was used for data management. The reliability of the evaluation instrument was obtained by means of Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with a value of 0.087.

In addition, the Student's t-test was performed to compare the EI variable between two independent populations: the male and female genders. For EI, the value in the bottom row,  $p=0.213$ , was chosen. Since the P is greater than the alpha level of significance ( $P=0.05$ ), the null hypothesis is assumed, which happens to coincide

coincides with the hypothesis to be validated in this study, where it is established that there are no statistically significant differences in EI with respect to gender. After performing the statistical analyses, it has been corroborated that, at present, there are no statistically significant differences between men and women with respect to each and every one of the dimensions of EI, as well as in total EI.

Prueba t para la igualdad de medidas

	F	Pruebas de Levene de igualdad de varianzas (Sig.)	t	gl	Sig (bilateral)	Diferencia de medias	Diferencia de error estándar	95% de intervalo de confianza de la diferencia	
Percepción intrapersonal	5.947	.017	1.145	96	.255	.21165	.18487	-.15532	.57861
	-	-	1.313	86.793	.193	.21165	.16115	-.10867	.53196
	.799	.374	.914	96	.363	.18040	.19728	-.21120	.57200
Percepción interpersonal	-	-	.984	74.400	.328	.18040	.18339	-.18499	.54578
	1.965	.164	.667	96	.506	.14015	.21018	-.27704	.55735
Asimilación emocional	-	-	.731	77.963	.467	.14015	.19184	-.24178	.52208
	8.480	.004	1.351	96	.180	.24763	.18335	-.11632	.61158
Regulación emocional	-	-	1.595	91.569	.114	.24763	.15525	-.06072	.55598
IE Total	6.583	0.12	1.095	96	.276	.19496	.17803	-.15842	.54834
	-	-	1.253	86.388	.213	.19496	.15553	-.11421	.50413

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION.

So is Emotional Intelligence only for women? The answer is no.

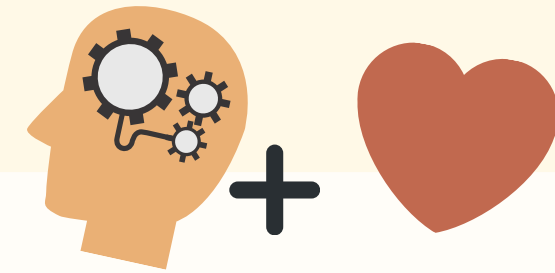
For this study, we learned that the differences in terms of gender are not significant, which can be justified in two ways. On the one hand, through the EQ Skills Model of Mayer and Salovey (1997), which presents EI as a skill that can be practiced by any person, and on the other hand, based on the idea that culture and education have evolved in recent years. Currently, education aims to follow an egalitarian model and teach both women and men in the same way. This is very different from what was socially imparted decades ago, so it is quite considerable that the results are not significant.

However, this data suggests that it is necessary to be cautious about concluding that gender is not a determinant of people's EI, without having examined the possible interactions that other variables may have with gender in their prediction. Likewise, it should be taken into account for future lines of research on gender and EI, conducting studies by administering other possible assessment instruments or much more complex studies in which cultural factors will be left in the background and other factors will be examined in greater depth.

# LA INTELIGENCIA EMOCIONAL (IE), ¿ES SÓLO COSA DE MUJERES? *Un estudio empírico.*

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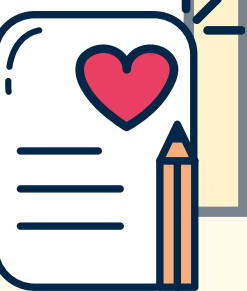


## Introducción.

- *¿Qué es la IE?*
- Gardner, 'La Teoría de las Inteligencias Múltiples' (1983)
- Daniel Goleman, 'La Inteligencia Emocional se puede aprender' (1998).
- *El Modelo de Habilidades de la Inteligencia Emocional de Mayer y Salovey (1997)* retrata el cómo la Inteligencia Emocional es una habilidad y cómo ésta puede ser aprendida mediante la práctica.
- Cómo influye la cultura y la educación en la Inteligencia Emocional.
- **¿Existen diferencias de género respecto a la inteligencia Emocional?**

## Método.

- Muestra del estudio: **98** personas, (66 mujeres, 32 hombres).
- Instrumento de evaluación: La Escala de Inteligencia Emocional de Wong y Law (**WLEIS**; Wong y Law, 2002) *Alfa de Cronbach : 0.887* .
- El análisis para la obtención de diferencias de medias, en función del sexo, se ha realizado a través de la aplicación informática **IBM SPSS 20.0 Statistics**.



## Resultados.

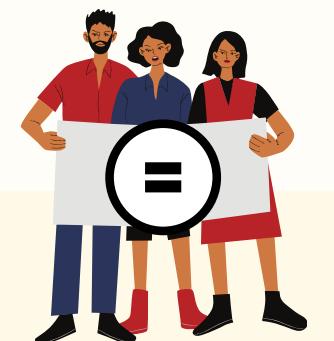
- **Prueba T de Student** . (Nivel de significación ( $P=0.05$ )).
- No existen diferencias estadísticamente significativas en cuanto a la IE respecto al género.  $P=0,213$  ( $P>0.05$ )
- No se han observado diferencias significativas en cuanto a las diferentes dimensiones de IE.

Prueba t para la igualdad de medidas									
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	-	-	1.253	86.388	<u>.213</u>	.19496	.15553	-.11421	.50413

Tabla 1. Prueba de muestras independientes.

## Discusión y conclusiones.

- El objetivo de este estudio era conocer si existían diferencias de género respecto a la inteligencia emocional.
- Hoy en día la cultura y la educación han evolucionando, por lo que partiendo de una educación igual para hombres y mujeres y siguiendo la premisa del Modelo de Habilidades (Mayer y Salovey, 1997), se puede justificar el porqué **no existen diferencias significativas para este estudio**.
- Tras la investigación, se puede concluir que no existen diferencias significativas entre hombres y mujeres respecto a la IE. Sería de gran utilidad **seguir con un modelo educativo igualitario** para seguir avanzando en este campo.
- Es necesario ser cautelosos a la hora de concluir que el **género no sea determinante en la IE** de las personas, sin haber examinado las posibles interacciones que otras variables puedan establecer con el género en su predicción.



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