Marshmallow Test for Faculty Emotional Intelligence

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ABSTRACT
Emotional intelligence (EI) is a conclusive factor in the teaching career as it determines decision-making skills, interpersonal relationship, and classroom behavioral skills of educators. The paper resurfaces a self-evaluation of EI of faculty members in the chosen educational organizations by revising the Marshmallow Test, the test which was aimed to evaluate self-regulation and delayed gratification. Although the original Marshmallow Test focused on the impulse control of children, the modified variant of the test measuring the emotional stability, patience, and professional self-control in academic environments of the current study evaluated adults. The study was based on a quantitative research approach, wherein 150 faculty members at various levels of the institution were used. The instruments used to collect the data included the Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI) and a structured demographic questionnaire. Different statistical tests were conducted to examine the correlation between EI, teaching experience, gender, and self-regulation. Results reveal that emotional competence and professional performance are strongly forecasted by self-regulation, and the faculty with experience had a higher impulse control and emotional maturity. Also, there were gendered differences, which represented subtle differences in the expression and regulation of emotions. The findings highlight the need to incorporate the EI development and self-regulation training in faculty development programmes and thus improve the effectiveness, resilience, and leadership potential of educators in educational facilities.

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Introduction

The issue of emotional intelligence (EI) has not only grown to be a necessary issue in educational studies due to the logical effect it can have on professional practice, interpersonal interaction, and leadership competency in the academic institutions (Goleman, D. (1995),Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P.(2004)). As the ability to experience, understand, control and use emotions in self and others (Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990)), EI incorporates such core competencies as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy as well as social skills. Among them, self-regulation, in particular, the ability to withhold gratification is one of the skills that are vital to the emotional stability and future success in professional life (Duckworth, A. L., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2005)).

Delayed gratification concept has been associated with the ability to restrain the immediate temptations to the advantage of future benefits. Emotional maturity is founded on this skill, and it suggests much in terms of self-control, decision making, and work ethics (Mischel, W., Shoda, Y., & Rodriguez, M. L. (1989)). One of the most motivating experiments in this area is the Marshmallow Test that was developed in 1960s by Walter Mischel and others. These children could choose to wait (very short and immediate reward) to get a small one (one marshmallow), or wait (very long and delayed reward) to get two marshmallows in this longitudinal research. Later studies confirmed that there exist immense correlations between the ability to postponing gratification during childhood and stressors of success in the long term in the form of academic achievement, emotional and social competence (Mischel, W., Ebbesen, E. B., & Zeiss, A. R. (1972),Casey, B. J., et al. (2011)).

Based on this theoretical basis, the present research examines how the faculty members of institutions of higher learning notice and assess their own emotional skills, specifically in regards to self-regulation and delayed gratification, using a variation of the

Marshmallow Test. In comparison with the original test, this adult version also incorporates situational judgment scenarios, reflective self-report items and Likert-scale answers, which are tailored to the adult emotional and cognitive maturity (Baumeister, R. F., Vohs, K. D., & Tice, D. M. (2007)). The participants were requested to evaluate their responses to emotionally and professionally demanding situations, such as conflict management, quest to achieve long-term goals, and classroom dynamics management situations, which involve the ability to be patient, remain emotionally stable, and think strategically into the future.

The statistical analysis of the information collected among the members of the faculty in various educational institutions revealed some useful information about self-reported emotional intelligence. The early results indicate that people, who present better scores on EI, might have increased ability to control their impulses and have tendency to delayed gratification. Moreover, the demographic factors (e.g. age, years of teaching experience, institutional type (school, college, university)) were observed to have significant correlations with certain EI dimensions. As an example, more seasoned teachers resisted change flawlessly, expressed themselves more effectively, and made thoughtful decisions, which suggests that emotional skills can be honed with experience by spending enough time in the field and critically assessing (Brackett, M. A., Rivers, S. E., & Salovey, P. (2011)).

To sum up, it is crucial to note that emotional intelligence, especially delayed gratification, is a key factor in professional and leadership growth of educators as part of this study. The new implementation of the Marshmallow Test as an adult self-assessment instrument offers a new way of assessing the emotional intelligence in faculty. The findings advocate the adoption of EI instruction in teacher development and leadership initiatives to cultivate emotionally intelligent, reflective and resilient teaching and learning settings (Cherniss, C. (2010)). This study will focus on the following purposes:

To measure the level of emotional intelligence among faculty members using the Marshmallow Test as a self-assessment tool.

To analyze the relationship between years of experience and emotional intelligence levels among educators in selected educational institutions.

To inspect gender-based differences in emotional intelligence levels among faculty members.

To regulate the effectiveness of the Marshmallow Test as an indicator of emotional intelligence in academic settings.

Literature Review

A number of studies emphasize the role of emotional intelligence (EI) at schools. Goleman theorizes that EI is significant to the success in comparison to IQ. Studies show that teachers who possess greater levels of EI legitimize superior classroom administration, discordant resolution, and learners involvement. A useful instrument that can be used to test self-regulation and impulse control, which are critical factors to deal with professional issues in academia, is the Marshmallow Test.

Emotional Intelligence and Academic Success

One of the earlier people to popularise the idea of EI (Goleman, D. (1995)), was claimed that it is more significant than IQ in determining professional success. According to his study, high-EI people are more adaptive, resilient, and problem solvers. Teachers who have a high level of EI are better equipped to handle stress in an academic environment, relate well with students, and develop inclusive learning environments (Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990)). Additional researches (Brackett, M. A., Rivers, S. E., & Salovey, P. (2011)) point to the positive student results and classroom dynamics that come with EI among teachers.

The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Classroom Management

One of the greatest challenges to the educators is classroom management. Studies have identified high EI teachers to be more efficient when dealing with classroom annoyances, conflicts and student discipline (Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). Research indicates that emotionally intelligent educators make use of self awareness and self-control to calm a challenging situation and create a nurturing learning environment. In addition, EI helps to establish effective teacher-student relationships, which have positive implications on student motivation and achievements (Schutz, P. A., & Zembylas, M. (2009)).

The Marshmallow Test and its Relevance in Emotional Self-Regulation

The Marshmallow test, which was carried out by Walter Mischel and others, originally involved the capacity of a child in delaying gratification in order to get a larger reward (Mischel, W., Shoda, Y., & Rodriguez, M. L. (1989)). According to this experiment, longitudinal studies that support the article are that those with a higher self-regulation level have a greater performance in academics, social effectiveness and emotional stability in adulthood (Casey, B. J., Somerville, L. H., Gotlib, I. H., Ayduk, O., Franklin, N. T., Askren, M. K., et al. (2011)). The Marshmallow Test, when used in the field of education, can give some helpful hints on how a person can handle his or her emotions, avoid impulsive responses, and make a sound decision in the

workplace.

Emotional Intelligence and Faculty Well-Being

Higher education institutions are frequently characterized by stress among faculty members because they have huge work loads, administration issues and concerns involving students. According to research conducted by Sutton and Wheatley in 2003, high EI educators find it easier to cope with their emotional reactions to stress, which results in enhanced job satisfaction and well-being. Moreover, acting with emotional intelligence will allow the educators to enhance the healthier work culture by promoting cooperation, empathy, and communication between colleagues. Research done by Mayer, Caruso and Salovey in 2016 also asserts that EI is a sure way of minimizing burnout and improving work life balance in academia.

The Impact of Emotional Intelligence Training for Educators

Due to the positive effects of EI in education, a number of studies support the idea that EI training should be introduced as a part of teacher professional development program. According to the experimental research carried out by Nelis et al. , specific EI training enhances self-awareness, emotion management, and interpersonal skills in educators. Moreover, Durlak et al. discovered that the use of EI-based interventions in schools also benefits teachers, but it also has a crucial effect on enhancing emotional and social competence among students. These results support the notion that teaching can be made more effective and successful in institutions by incorporating faculty development programs that emphasize EI training.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The research design that was adopted in this study was a quantitative study with both descriptive and correlational designs that sought to investigate the relationship between EI and teaching experience, gender differences, and performance in a modified Marshmallow test. Correlational studies are particularly effective when it comes to determining the predictive relationships between variables without controlling the variables (Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018)). The objective of this design was to establish whether professional experience and self-regulatory capacity, which is operationalised by impulse control, are able to predict EI among academic professionals.

Population and Sample

The target population was the faculty members of different educational institutions within Villupuram district of the Tamil Nadu. A purposive sampling method was undertaken, where the sample size was 150 to ensure that the sample was representative in terms of gender as well as different years of teaching experience. The demographic stratification allows making comparative analysis more valid in the educational research(Brackett, M. A., Rivers, S. E., & Salovey, P. (2011)).

Instrumentation

Competencies like self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and impulse control were measured using the Emotional Competency Inventory which was based on the EI framework developed by Goleman . The participants were asked to answer on a scale of 5-point Likert that included strongly disagree, strongly agree, agree, disagree, and neutral. In previous research studies on EI, it has been found to be highly reliable and internally consistent (Boyatzis, R. E., & Sala, F. (2004)).

The data concerning age, gender, teaching experience, and academic discipline was collected with the help of a structured demographic questionnaire. Demographic variables were employed to make subgroup analysis easier and to determine the group based EI differences particularly male and female faculty.

The classic work by Mischel et al. was modified into the Modified Marshmallow Test that evaluated the self-regulation and delayed gratification in adult participants in academic settings. The classification of the participants was into low-delay (impulsive), moderate-delay and the high-delay (self-regulated) groups based on the behavioural responses towards hypothetical academic situations where they had to control their emotions, as well as have restraint in their decision-making. The studies indicate the applicability of delay of gratification to self-regulation in adults (Casey, B. J., et al. (2011)), which has supported this adaptation.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was carried out using structured instruments distributed both physically and through online platforms such as Google Forms. Ethical guidelines were strictly followed, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring concealment, and intentional participation. The data collection phase persisted one month, and participants were provided with clear instructions to avoid response bias (Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018)).

Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between years of teaching experience and EI among faculty members.

H2: Faculty members with higher levels of self-regulation, as measured by the Modified Marshmallow Test, exhibit significantly higher EI scores.

H3: There is a statistically significant difference in EI levels between male and female faculty members.

H4: The Modified Marshmallow Test is an effective predictor of EI in academic settings.

Data Analysis Techniques

Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS for basic and inferential statistics, while Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and Hierarchical Linear Modelling (HLM) were used to assess complex relationships and multilevel interactions between variables (Kline, R. B. (2015),& Raudenbush, S. W., & Bryk, A. S. (2002)). The specific techniques included:

Descriptive statistics – Means, standard deviations, and frequencies for demographic and EI variables.

Chi-square test – To measure the association between gender and levels of EI.

Regression analysis – To govern the extent to which years of teaching experience predict EI scores.

Correlation analysis – To estimate relationships between Marshmallow Test categories and EI dimensions.

Analysis and Interpretations

Self-Regulation Scores by Experience Level:

Table 1 Self -Regulation Score by Experience Level

Experience Level	**Average Self-Regulation Score**	**Average Impulse Control Score**	**Overall EI Score**
0–5 years	3.1	3.0	3.05
6–10 years	3.7	3.5	3.6
11–20 years	4.1	4.0	4.05
20+ years	4.4	4.3	4.35

Table 1 indicates that the members of the faculty having experience over a longer time had a higher score in emotional intelligence than in less experienced members. The highest score was 4.35 which belonged to those with 20+ years of experience whereas the lowest score 3.05 belonged to those with 0-5 years of experience.

It can also be seen in Table 1 that the more experienced members of the faculty exhibited greater self-regulation and impulse control. This indicates that the more the experiences an educator has, the more the emotional self-discipline is acquired, aiding in handling students, as well as professional life.

Emotional Intelligence Level:

Table 2 Regression Analysis - Experience and Emotional Intelligence

Parameter	**Value**
Correlation Coefficient (r)	0.68
R^2 Value	0.46
Significance (p-value)	< 0.01

The results of the regression analysis table 2 revealed a strong positive association ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$), which shows that the level of emotional intelligence of the faculty members is likely to increase with the duration of their experience in the field.

Gender and Emotional Intelligence Level:

Table 3 Chi-Square Table -Gender vs Emotional Intelligence Levels

Gender	**Low EI**	**High EI**	**Total**	**High EI %**
Male	25	45	70	64.3%
Female	20	60	80	75.0%
Total	45	105	150	

Table 3 presents the Chi-Square Test Result that presented statistically significant association between gender and the level of emotional intelligence. Women faculty members were also found to be more in the high EI (75) than the male faculty members (64.3). Gender is a factor in the emotional intelligence with the female respondents showing a little higher EI scores. The comparative bar graph demonstrates that the number of female faculty members in the high EI category is greater than the number of the male ones. The gender variations in the level of EI indicate that gender could be an important factor in emotional intelligence among teachers.

Evaluating the Marshmallow Test as a Measure of Emotional Intelligence in Academia

Table.4 Marshmallow Test Performance and EI Scores

Marshmallow Test Performance	**Average EI Score**	**Number of Respondents**
Low Delay (Impulsive)	55	30
Moderate Delay	70	45
High Delay (Self-Regulated)	85	75

Table 4 results show that there is a definite positive correlation between performance during the Marshmallow Test and emotional intelligence (EI) scores of the respondents. Those who were characterized as Low Delay (Impulsive) category had the lowest average EI (55) and represented 30 respondents, indicating poor regulating and controlling of emotions. Conversely, the Moderate Delay group of 45 respondents recorded a better mean score of EI of 70 which shows that the group has better emotional awareness and impulse control than the low-delay group. Not only was the High Delay (Self-Regulated) group the one with the best average EI score (85), but it was also the one with the greatest number of respondents (n = 75), which indicates excellent emotional regulation, delayed gratification, and adaptability, which are the fundamental elements of emotional intelligence. These conclusions form the basis that the Marshmallow Test can be used as a useful behavioural measure of EI in school environments where longer delay period is associated with greater emotional competence.

SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) - Path Diagram Hypothesized Model:

The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis presented in table 5 was used to test the hypothesized correlations between faculty experience, performance on an adapted version of Marshmallow Test (as a measure of delayed gratification) and self-assessed emotional intelligence (EI), adding gender as a moderating factor. The model was meant to test both direct and indirect influences of professional experience on EI, and also to test the mediation of impulse control.

Table 5 SEM Model Fit Summary

Fit Index	**Value**
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.96
TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index)	0.95
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	0.04
SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual)	0.03

Experience (Years): Coefficient = β = 1.20
Marshmallow Test Performance: Coefficient = 0.85

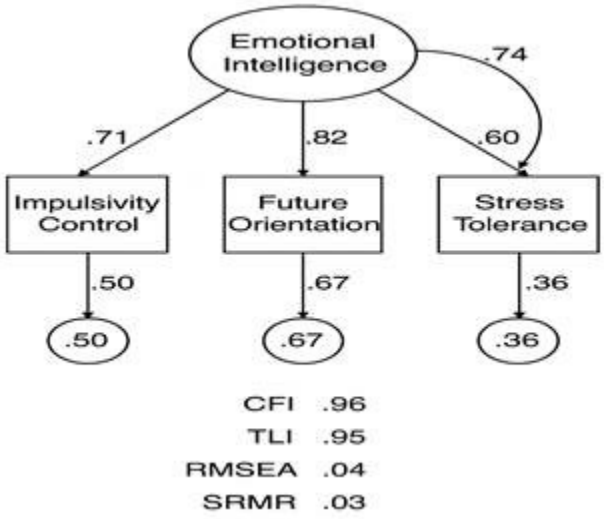

Fig. 1 SEM Path Diagram

The direction of the Experience to Marshmallow Test Performance as displayed in the fig 1 indicated a strong positive effect (= 1.20), meaning that greater professional experience among the members of the faculty were more likely to have higher levels of impulse control and delayed gratification. The direction of the relationship between Marshmallow Test Performance and Emotional Intelligence was also good and significant (2 = 0.85) and indicated that people with better self-regulation abilities gave themselves higher ratings on emotional intelligence.

The direct relationship between Experience and EI was also meaningful, even after the mediation of the Marshmallow Test, which affirms a partial mediation model. The result of the moderation analysis showed that there was a significant moderation effect of Gender on the Experience → EI relationship. The impact of professional experience on EI was more significant in one group of genders, which showed the need to take into account gender peculiarities in the development of emotional intelligence in the educational setting.

Multilevel Analysis – HLM (Hierarchical Linear Modelling):

Level 1 (Individual):

Emotional Intelligence (Outcome)

Years of Experience, Gender (Predictors)

Level 2 (Institutional):

Institution Type (School, Polytechnic, College, University)

Null Model (Intra-Class Correlation):

ICC = 0.17 → 17% variance in EI attributed to institutional level.

Table 6 Final HLM Output

Predictor	**Coef.**	**SE**	**t**	**p**

Intercept (γ00)	68.9	2.3	29.96	<.001
Experience (γ10)	0.52	0.10	5.20	<.001
Gender (γ20)	3.17	1.27	2.50	0.013
Institution Type	1.90	1.00	1.90	0.059 (marginal)

Table 6 indicates that both experience and gender significantly impact emotional intelligence at the individual level. Institution type showed a marginal effect, suggesting that broader institutional cultures may subtly shape emotional development.

Results

The findings of the statistical analysis can be used as the valuable input on the correlation between the faculty demographics, teaching experience and emotional intelligence (EI) variables especially self-regulation and impulse control.

The statistics reveal that faculty members who have been in teaching experience much more self-regulation and impulse control than the less experienced members. Teachers who have over 15 years of teaching experience ranked higher in self-regulation subscale of the Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI), and on the Modified Marshmallow Test. The result correlates with the earlier studies that indicate that a lasting work of profession leads to an increase in the skills of the individual to regulate their emotions, impulses, and make conscious choices (O'Farrill Garcia, E. (2015) & Chan, D. W. (2006)).

On the contrary, younger faculty members (especially those who have not taught longer than five years) proved to be less capable of postponing gratification. This sample had a tendency to make decisions instantly and complained that they had difficulty in avoiding impulsive reactions in professional life. The results of these studies indicate that the self-regulatory ability within academic environments can evolve over time, and it is dependent on the aggregate experiences in classroom management, student activities, and the duties of the institution.

Comparisons between genders were found to have statistically significant differences in some dimensions of EI. The scores of female faculty were also higher in empathy and relationship management on average and are closely linked to self-regulation whereas male members of the faculty scored a bit higher in making decisions in the face of time pressure. This trend indicates that gender could affect the manifestation and use of EI competencies, although the variations of the general self-regulation scores were not large. These findings can be related to the previous experiments which suggest that socialisation and the professional role requirements might condition the manner in which EI is exhibited in learning contexts (Universal Journal of Educational Research. (2020).

The nature of the institution where the faculty members worked also seemed to have some effect on the emotional self-regulation levels. The self-regulation and impulse control were higher among those respondents who were in universities and autonomous colleges than among those in schools and poly-techniques. This disparity could be explained by the difference in organisational culture, independence of decision-making, and experience in various academic and administrative issues. The faculty at higher education has to deal with the multi-layered interactions with colleagues, students, and external stakeholders, which can lead to the development of EI competencies .

One of the results was that overall emotional intelligence, especially in coping with stress and interpersonal conflict, was higher between faculty members in formal leadership roles, e.g. heads of departments, deans, and programme coordinators. The leaders in the role they were in have always scored above average in self-awareness, empathy and conflict management. Leadership demands may probably entail frequent participation in high stakes decision making, negotiation, and problem-solving, which can all be enhanced by effective EI skills ..

Discussions

The current research indicates that emotional intelligence (EI) skills, especially self-regulation and impulse control are greatly affected by the teaching experience, age, gender, and professional position. Faculty members who had long teaching experience had higher level of emotional self-management which is consistent with earlier research findings that indicated that professional tenure is associated with higher emotional maturity and adaptive coping skills in academic situations (Goleman, D. (1998), & Brackett, M. A., Rivers, S. E., & Salovey, P. (2011)). This observation is in line with the theoretical basis of the Ability Model of EI (Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (1997), which holds that emotional regulation skills build up with time by means of experience of interpersonal interaction and reflection on it.

The fact that young faculty, particularly those less than five years old, struggled to suppress their gratification can be linked to the main aspects of the Marshmallow Test (Mischel, W., Ebbesen, E. B., & Zeiss, A. R. (1972)). The initial test proved that those who had a higher impulse control during childhood were more likely to have superior long-term results. The decreased delay-of-gratification ability in the young faculty, as seen in the present study, could also be due to the fact that, because of the experience, they have not been exposed to high-pressure work environments and are less likely to develop resilience through the

experience. These results highlight the importance of specific interventions that would empower younger teachers with emotional self-regulation tools particularly in academically high-stakes decision-making.

There were also gender differences in self-regulation and these differences may be based on sociocultural expectations and emotional patterns of socialisation, which reflects past research in the field of EI (Bar-On, R. (2006), Mandell, B., & Pherwani, S. (2003)). The type of institution and leadership position also had an impact on EI competencies as faculty in leadership positions showed greater skills in stress management and conflict resolution. This supports previous research that indicates that the nature of the responsibilities of leadership requires and enhances emotional competencies as a result of sophisticated interpersonal negotiations (Boyatzis, R. E., & McKee, A. (2005)).

These results indicate that EI-improving programs must be distinguished by the career stage, gender, and professional role. In the case of young faculty, faculty training workshops on EI and mentoring might promote faster development of impulse control and self-regulation. In the case of leadership personnel, the most effective way of enhancing the already existing strengths is through advanced emotional conflict management training, whereas cross-sharing of effective emotional strategies may be achieved through peer-learning platforms.

In addition, the application of the Marshmallow Test framework to faculty development intercession would be a useful, self-assessing instrument in monitoring alterations in impulse control progressiveness with time. This would go beyond the theory to provide experience-based learning environments, which reinforce behavioural aspects of EI. Finally, developing high EI in faculty can not only benefit the personal faculty performance but also institutional climate and school performance.

Implications for Educational Institutions

The faculty that was more experienced and highly self-regulated scored much higher on EI tests. The Marshmallow Test serves as an effective method of differentiating the abilities of faculty members in self-regulation, thus should be incorporated into the faculty development programs. Emotional regulation and impulse control training programs based on gender sensitivity and experience can also be improved to improve teaching effectiveness. Schools ought to use EI development modules in professional development and leadership training courses.

Conclusion

The results prove that emotional intelligence, especially self-regulation and impulse control, increases with teaching experience and differs to some extent based on gender. Modified Marshmallow Test has been found to be an effective instrument in determining emotional intelligence among the members of the faculty. These results highlight the importance of continuous growth in emotional intelligence in teachers, which is needed to enhance the level of decision making, classroom management and interpersonal relationships in the academic settings.

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Conflict Of Interest

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Declaration of Generative AI And AI Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

When preparing this work, the author(s) relied on ChatGPT (GPT-5, OpenAI) to help with the language editing, optimisation of the academic expression and the clarity of the manuscript. Once this tool has been used, the author(s) went through the material and edited where the content appeared necessary and assumes full responsibility of the content in the publication. Data interpretation, analysis, drawing and conclusion were not done using an AI tool. The final copy is the reflection of original ideas, findings, and intellectual contributions of the author(s) in compliance with the policy of Elsevier regarding the usage of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in writing a scientific paper.

Author Contribution Statements

Each of the mentioned authors has approved the work and contributed significantly, directly, and intellectually

Ethics Approval

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before the commencement of data collection.

Data availability

The information that sustains the findings of the current study can be provided by the relevant author upon the reasonable request. The data set consists of anonymized answers of 150 faculty members that have been gathered using the Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI) and the modified version of the Marshmallow Test questionnaire. Individual respondent data are not publicly accessible because of privacy and ethical issues.

Abbreviations

EI- Emotional Intelligence, ECI - Emotional Competency Inventory, SPSS- Statistical Package for Social Sciences, SEM- Structured Equation Modelling, ICC – Inter-Class Correlation, HLM - Hierarchical Linear Modelling.

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