

International journal of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research

ISSN 2456-4567 (O)

Self-awareness as a Core Dimension of Emotional Intelligence among Working Women: Evidence from Coimbatore District

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Abstract: Emotional Intelligence (EI) has become an essential competency for employees to effectively manage workplace challenges, interpersonal relationships, and personal well-being. Among the various dimensions of emotional intelligence, self-awareness is considered the foundation for recognizing emotions, regulating behaviour, and making informed decisions. The present study examines self-awareness among working women in Coimbatore District and identifies the most significant self-awareness factors using Friedman Mean Rank analysis. Primary data were collected from 476 working women representing various occupational sectors through a structured questionnaire containing twelve self-awareness statements measured on a five-point Likert scale. Friedman Mean Rank analysis was employed to prioritize the factors influencing self-awareness. The findings indicate that all the self-awareness statements recorded mean values above the neutral value of three, indicating a satisfactory level of emotional awareness among the respondents. The statement "Try to ignore negative emotions as much as possible" obtained the highest mean score (3.93), followed by "Exhibit a sense of humour" (3.89) and "Aware of own strength and weakness" (3.85). Conversely, "Able to understand own feelings" obtained the lowest mean score (3.67), suggesting that although working women effectively regulate emotions, deeper emotional understanding requires further improvement. The study concludes that self-awareness significantly enhances emotional intelligence and contributes to better workplace behaviour, emotional stability, and professional effectiveness among working women. The findings provide valuable implications for organizations, policymakers, and human resource professionals in designing emotional intelligence development programmes that promote employee well-being, productivity, and work-life balance.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Self-awareness, Working Women, Friedman Mean Rank, Emotional Competence, Workplace Effectiveness, Coimbatore District.

Introduction

The increasing participation of women in the workforce has transformed the social and economic landscape of India. Working women today contribute significantly to economic development while simultaneously managing multiple professional and personal responsibilities. Balancing occupational demands with family commitments often exposes women to emotional stress, workplace pressure, interpersonal conflicts, and role overload. Consequently, emotional intelligence has emerged as a vital competency that enables working women to manage emotions effectively, build healthy interpersonal relationships, and maintain psychological well-being.

Emotional Intelligence, popularized by Goleman (1995), refers to an individual's ability to recognize, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively. Among its five dimensions, self-awareness is regarded as the cornerstone of emotional intelligence because it enables individuals to recognize their emotional states, understand their strengths and weaknesses, and respond appropriately to different situations. Self-aware individuals demonstrate greater confidence, resilience, adaptability, and decision-making ability, which ultimately improve their workplace performance and quality of life.

For working women, self-awareness plays a particularly important role in managing occupational stress, maintaining work-life balance, communicating effectively, and adapting to organizational changes. Women who understand their emotional strengths and limitations are better equipped to handle workplace challenges without allowing negative emotions to affect their productivity and interpersonal relationships. Therefore, assessing the level of self-awareness among working women provides valuable insights into their emotional competence and helps organizations develop targeted interventions to strengthen emotional intelligence.

The present study focuses on identifying the most significant self-awareness factors among working women in Coimbatore District using Friedman Mean Rank analysis. Understanding these factors will assist employers, policymakers, and human resource professionals in designing emotional intelligence development programmes that enhance employee well-being and organizational effectiveness.

Review of Literature

Extremera, Mérida-López, and Sánchez-Álvarez (2021) examined the influence of emotional intelligence on employees' psychological well-being and occupational performance. Their findings revealed that self-awareness enables employees to recognize emotional triggers, regulate stress, and maintain positive workplace relationships. Individuals with higher self-awareness exhibited greater resilience and lower levels of burnout. The study emphasized incorporating emotional intelligence training into organizational development programmes to improve employee well-being and productivity.

Miao, Humphrey, and Qian (2021) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis investigating emotional intelligence and workplace outcomes. The study concluded that emotional intelligence significantly enhances job performance, organizational commitment, and interpersonal effectiveness. Self-awareness was identified as the primary emotional competency that influences decision-making and emotional regulation. Employees possessing higher self-awareness demonstrated superior adaptability and professional effectiveness.

Mattingly and Kraiger (2022) examined the effectiveness of emotional intelligence training programmes in organizations. Their study reported that structured emotional intelligence interventions significantly improved employees' self-awareness, communication skills, stress management, and leadership competencies. The authors concluded that organizations should invest in emotional intelligence development to enhance workforce effectiveness and employee satisfaction.

Sharma and Singh (2024) investigated emotional intelligence among Indian working women across different occupational sectors. The study found that women possessing higher self-awareness demonstrated greater confidence, emotional stability, and effective work–life balance. Self-awareness was identified as a significant predictor of job satisfaction, resilience, and organizational commitment. The authors recommended regular emotional intelligence training programmes for women employees.

Sánchez-Álvarez, Extremera, and Fernández-Berrocal (2024)

This study explored emotional intelligence among employees in service organizations. The findings indicated that self-awareness significantly enhances emotional regulation, customer relationship management, resilience, and workplace adaptability. Employees with greater emotional awareness experienced lower occupational stress and reported higher job satisfaction. The researchers emphasized self-awareness as the foundation for sustainable employee development.

Objective of the Study

- To identify the most significant self-awareness factors influencing emotional intelligence among working women in Coimbatore District using Friedman Mean Rank analysis.

Results and Discussion

The Friedman Mean Rank analysis was employed to determine the relative importance of twelve self-awareness statements among working women in Coimbatore District.

Statement	N	Mean	SD	Mean Rank

Able to stop certain compulsive habits	476	3.69	1.074	XI
Able to understand own feelings	476	3.67	1.096	XII
Able to adjust behavior within ter acting people	476	3.79	1.110	VI
If upset, able to realize what is happening around	476	3.77	1.181	VIII
Try to ignore negative emotions as much as possible	476	3.93	1.150	I
Exhibit a sense of hum our	476	3.89	1.158	II
Aware of own strength and weakness	476	3.85	1.141	III
Ability to handle most up setting problems	476	3.78	1.169	VII
Recognize how feelings affect performance	476	3.75	1.137	IX
Not depressed easily	476	3.81	1.174	IV
Happy with attitude	476	3.74	1.169	X
Identify both goodandbad points	476	3.80	1.183	V

The results reveal that the mean values ranged from 3.67 to 3.93, while the standard deviation varied between 1.074 and 1.183, indicating a moderate variation in respondents' opinions. Since all mean values are above the neutral score of three, the findings indicate that the respondents possess a satisfactory level of self-awareness, which forms the basis of emotional intelligence.

Among the twelve statements, "Try to ignore negative emotions as much as possible" secured the highest mean score (Mean = 3.93) and ranked first. This finding suggests that working women consciously regulate negative emotions while handling multiple responsibilities at work and home. Effective emotional regulation enables them to maintain professional behaviour, reduce workplace stress, and cope with challenging situations.

The second-ranked statement, "Exhibit a sense of humour" (Mean = 3.89), indicates that respondents use humour as a positive coping strategy to manage occupational stress and foster healthy interpersonal relationships. The third-ranked statement, "Aware of own strength and weakness" (Mean = 3.85), reflects the respondents' ability to evaluate themselves objectively, identify areas for improvement, and utilize their strengths effectively.

The statements "Not depressed easily" (Mean = 3.81) and "Identify both good and bad points" (Mean = 3.80) ranked fourth and fifth respectively, highlighting emotional resilience and balanced self-evaluation among working women. Likewise, "Able to adjust behaviour with interacting people" (Mean = 3.79) and "Able to handle most upsetting problems" (Mean = 3.78) indicate that respondents possess adaptive emotional skills that facilitate positive workplace interactions and effective conflict management.

The remaining statements, namely "If upset, able to realize what is happening around" (Mean = 3.77), "Recognize how feelings affect performance" (Mean =

3.75), "Happy with attitude" (Mean = 3.74), and "Able to stop certain compulsive habits" (Mean = 3.69), also recorded positive mean scores, indicating agreement among respondents regarding these aspects of self-awareness.

The statement "Able to understand own feelings" obtained the lowest mean score (Mean = 3.67) and ranked twelfth. Although this dimension received the lowest rank, the mean score remained above the neutral value, indicating that respondents moderately agreed with the statement. This finding suggests that while working women effectively regulate emotions and adapt to workplace demands, greater emphasis should be placed on developing emotional reflection and self-understanding through emotional intelligence training programmes.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that working women possess a healthy level of self-awareness, particularly in emotional regulation, resilience, and positive interpersonal behaviour. These competencies contribute significantly to workplace effectiveness, psychological well-being, and the ability to maintain a healthy balance between professional and personal responsibilities.

Conclusion

Self-awareness is the foundation of emotional intelligence and plays a pivotal role in enhancing the emotional competence of working women. The findings of the present study indicate that the respondents possess a satisfactory level of self-awareness, as reflected by the positive mean scores across all twelve statements. The highest-ranked factor, "Try to ignore negative emotions as much as possible," demonstrates the ability of working women to regulate emotions effectively while managing diverse professional and personal responsibilities. Similarly, the high rankings for exhibiting a sense of humour and recognizing personal strengths and weaknesses indicate emotional maturity, resilience, and adaptive coping strategies.

Although "Able to understand own feelings" received the lowest rank, its mean score remained above the neutral level, suggesting scope for further improvement rather than a lack of emotional competence. Organizations should therefore implement structured emotional intelligence development programmes, self-awareness workshops, mentoring initiatives, and counselling support to strengthen emotional understanding among women employees. [‘Enhancing self-awareness will not only improve workplace performance but also promote psychological well-being, leadership effectiveness, work–life balance, and long-term career success. Consequently, investing in self-awareness development among working women can contribute significantly to sustainable organizational growth and employee empowerment.

Acknowledgement

This research paper is published through the VI cycle seed money grant provided by NGM College, Pollachi.

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doi.org/10.54121/2021111528