

The Relationship between Teachers' Gender and their Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Intelligence

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Abstract

The role of teachers and their personal characteristics in EFL classes are factors that cannot be undermined. This study investigated the relationship between teachers' gender and their interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence as two key factors which seem to affect the students' willingness to communicate. To achieve the aims of this study, 4 male and 4 female teachers from a language institute in Hamedan, Iran, were purposefully sampled to take part. Then a questionnaire regarding teachers' interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence, prepared by the researchers, was validated and administered to the participating teachers. Moreover, to increase the validity of data all the 8 classes were observed and an observation checklist was filled. The results of the study obtained from both questionnaire and observation checklist indicated no significant difference between male and female teachers' interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences.

Keywords: interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, gender

I. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of Multiple Intelligences (MI) proposed by Howard Gardner (1999, 1983, as cited in Brown, 2007) revolutionized the traditional thoughts about IQ. Gardner's claim that there are various kinds of intelligence help everyone involved in teaching and learning to understand the differences among people and focus on what they can do instead of what they cannot.

Initially his list consisted of eight intelligences (linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, naturalist, interpersonal, and intrapersonal); however, since then three more intelligences (spiritual, existential, and moral) have been added.

Most of the studies done so far have concerned themselves with the concept of Multiple Intelligences as a general term and little research has been carried out to investigate each of these intelligences separately and very few, if any, have attempted to investigate language teachers' interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences and their relationship with gender.

Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the relationship between teachers' interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences and their gender in order to shed light on its possible bearing on students' willingness to communicate and participate in class settings.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Interpersonal intelligence

Interpersonal intelligence or as Armstrong (2002) puts it 'people smart' is the capacity to work and interact effectively with people, and to try to understand their moods, motivations, desires and worries and more importantly it is the ability to notice the distinctions among others. Sensitivity to facial expressions, gestures and voice are some of the features of this intelligence (Armstrong, 2009). According to Gardner (2006) "in more advanced forms, this intelligence permits a skilled adult to read the intentions and desires of others, even when they have been hidden" (p. 13). Teachers, therapists, political and religious readers, salespersons and some parents are said to be interpersonally highly intelligent (Gardner, 2006).

B. Intrapersonal intelligence

It refers to the capacity to understand your own inner feelings, fears, temperaments, desires and motivations and having an in-depth knowledge of what you are good at and what you are not so good at in life. A person with this kind of intelligence is well aware of who they are, and as Gardner (2006) pointed out it is "the knowledge of the internal aspects of a person" (p. 14). People who are interpersonally smart have a broad knowledge of their own emotions, motivations, feelings, desires, strengths and lacks. As Gardner (2006) put it "a person with good intrapersonal intelligence has a viable and effective model of himself or herself—one that would be consistent with a description constructed by careful observers who know that person intimately" (p. 14) and as Armstrong (2002) in his book "You're Smarter Than You Think" stated, it is absolutely essential for a person's success to know who they are and what their own potential is. Those individuals who lack these abilities cannot achieve their goals easily. Examples of people with intrapersonal intelligence are creative artists, psychotherapists, entrepreneurs, and shamans (Armstrong, 2003).

C. Gender and Intelligence

"A number of researches have been conducted to know whether women are intelligent or men are more intelligent. The results of these researches showed, that there is no

considerable difference between the intelligence of women and men. And on the basis of these results, it can be stated that difference in gender is not the cause of difference in intelligence.” (Chauhan, 1991, cited in Shahzadeh et al., 2011, p.178) “But Still Great diversities in intelligence exist among people.”

In a study done by Naghavi and Redzuan (2011), gender differences in Emotional Intelligence can be seen from early childhood and a logical reason of that is the different kind of teaching given to boys and girls. Parents and societies’ expectations change due to sexuality. For instance, girls are expected to express their feelings more and have a higher EI than boys. However, Naghavi and Redzuan’s findings seemed to contradict this.

According to Hogan (1978, cited in Shahzadeh et al., 2011), there was a significant difference between male and female self-estimates of IQ levels in review of more than 11 studies. Beloff (1992) pointed out that in the case of investigating spatial and logical intelligence, Scottish male students tended to overestimate their intelligence while women underestimated theirs. (cited in Shahzadeh et al., 2011)

In another study carried out by Loori (2005), there was a significant difference between men and women’s preferences of intelligence. For instance, men were more interested in activities regarding logical, mathematical intelligence while women preferred to be involved in interpersonal activities. (cited in Shahzadeh et al., 2011)

In a study conducted by Furnham, Fong, and Martin (1999), men’s logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic and visual-spatial intelligence were significantly stronger than women.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

The participants of this study were 4 male and 4 female EFL teachers between 26 and 40 years old who were purposefully selected from a language institute in Hamedan, Iran. They varied in their field of studies (English translation, English Literature, TEFL and Translation Studies) and they all had at least 2 years of teaching experience.

B. Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaire. In the present study, a self-report questionnaire was adopted and adapted by the researchers and an attempt was made to implement any changes necessary to the items of the questionnaires by giving them to two teachers with similar characteristics of the participating teachers. Furthermore, three experts’ (holding PhD degrees) views were sought to improve the wording of the items for better understanding and fluency.

Teachers’ interpersonal and intrapersonal questionnaire. This questionnaire was a self-report questionnaire consisting 16 items which was designed based on Gardner’s (1999) MI model. All odd-numbered items checked the teachers’ interpersonal intelligence, for instance, the fifth item was: “I enjoy team sports rather than individual sports” while all even-

numbered ones were to investigate teachers' intrapersonal intelligence as the twelfth item indicates: "I have a good understanding of my feelings and how I will react to situations"

This questionnaire was also arranged in a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1-5. The numbers designating: 1. No, the statement is not at all like me; 2. The statement is a little like me; 3. The statement is somewhat like me; 4. The statement is a lot like me; 5. Yes, the statement is definitely me.

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient calculated for the interpersonal items was .81 and for the intrapersonal items it was equal to .70 and according to Pallant (2010) if Alpha value is above .7 the scale can be considered as reliable.

Observation checklists. As described below, an observation checklist was prepared to investigate the teachers' interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence and students' willingness to communicate (WTC) during a 90-minute class period.

Teachers' interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. A 20-item observation checklist was designed to check each of the 8 teachers' interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences in class atmosphere, the first 10 tapping into interpersonal intelligence and the second 10 checking intrapersonal intelligence. They were designed on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from, 1=Never, 2=Hardly ever, 3. Unsure, 4. Most of the time, 5. Always. This checklist consisted of questions about interpersonal intelligence such as, "Can the teacher sense the mood and feelings of students?" or intrapersonal intelligence such as "Does the teacher seem to work best when he/ she have emotional attachment to the subject?"

The Cronbach alpha coefficient calculated for the first 10 questions was equal to .95 which is very high and indicates strong internal consistency among the items. The second 10 questions were used to check the teachers' intrapersonal intelligence and were reported to have a high .91 Cronbach alpha coefficient.

C. Data Collection Procedures

The preliminary stage of the study involved a pilot study of the questionnaire. Afterwards, the questionnaire was reworded and revised based on the experts' comments and its finalized version was administered to the participating teachers.

Later each of the 8 teachers' classes was observed during a period of two weeks. It should be mentioned here that the teachers' consents for class observation were obtained and they were all informed beforehand and they were given sufficient time to prepare themselves for these procedures so that they would feel less nervous and more comfortable in their teaching process.

Afterwards, the observation checklist prepared to check the teachers' interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence was completed by the researchers. At the end of each class observation, the teachers were requested to fill the self-report interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence questionnaire.

IV. RESULTS

The research question regarding whether there is any significant difference between male and female teachers' interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence was investigated using a One-Sample t-test. Table 1 below summarizes the descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum of scores).

Table 1: Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Intelligence of Male and Female Teachers Obtained from Questionnaires and Observation

Group Statistics

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Inter Total	1	4	23.00	7.16	3.52
	2	4	30.50	3.41	1.70
IntraTotal	1	4	28.00	5.29	2.64
	2	4	33.50	1.00	.50
Teacher Observed InterTotal	1	4	28.70	13.50	6.75
	2	4	32.75	12.50	6.25
Teacher Observed IntraTotal	1	4	23.50	6.35	3.17
	2	4	27.75	9.10	4.55

In order to find out whether the difference between male and female teachers on interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence is due to sampling error and chance or it is due to real difference between these two variables, a One-Sample t-test was used. The results are presented in table 2.

Table 2: One-Sample t-Test: Comparison between Male and Female Teachers' Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Intelligence

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Inter Total	-1.89	6	0.108	-7.50
Intra Total	-2.04	6	0.087	-5.50
Teacher Observed Inter Total	-0.43	6	0.679	-4.00
Teacher Observed Intra Total	-0.76	6	0.473	-4.25

According to the results of this test, there is no significant difference between male and female teachers' interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence ($p>0.05$). Therefore, it could be concluded that teachers' gender does not have any bearings on their interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences.

V. CONCLUSION

The results of data analysis indicate no significant difference between male and female teachers in their interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. Therefore, based on the results of the present study, it can be concluded that despite the paramount importance of teachers' personal intelligences, i.e. interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences in educational settings, it seems that the gender of teachers has nothing to do with their personal intelligences and, therefore, cannot be regarded as a crucial element in students' willingness to interact with each other and their teacher in classroom settings.

A. Suggestions for Further Studies

The present study will encourage an extension of research into the issues of personal intelligences particularly teachers' interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences and their possible effect on students' interest to participate in class activities.

Moreover, the studies regarding teachers' features particularly their multiple intelligences are infrequent in the past studies and one can easily see the necessity of more research to be conducted to tackle this issue.

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