

**UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE IN THE THOUGHT PROCESS
AND FEELINGS ABOUT CONCEPTS IN DAY TO DAY LIFE –
GENDER PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract:

Thoughts and Emotions are the basic functions of the human brain. From the time one is made till he/she dies & maybe beyond one thinks & feels. This job of the brain is on for 365 days, 24/7. Yet behaviorists have pondered about the individual differences in the thought process of Humans. Some are extreme thinkers while some are cognitive misers. Some are highly emotional while some are blunt in spite of normal brain functioning. Psychologists & Neuro scientists have identified multiple factors like age, culture, experience, nature & nurture amongst other things for this difference.

Gender has emerged as an important factor that influences thoughts & feelings. Research has shown that men & women think & feel differently. Often people believe that men are logical thinkers while women are emotional thinkers. They attribute this difference to the net working of a man's & women's brain. The present study makes an attempt to make a scientific attempt to understand the thought process & feelings towards day to day concepts. This we feel will help in way to understand the complexities of the brain function. To evaluate the above relationship the researchers plan to do a scientific ex post facto design with a sample size of 100 women & 100 men in age group of 25-45, both educated and uneducated sample will be considered for the study.

Key words: *Gender, Thought process, Feelings, Concepts, Age & Education.*

Introduction

Gender is a compilation of biological sex of the individual, social roles surrounding it and the gender identity. It was in 1955, when the terms biological sex and gender as an identity were differentiated. Social sciences study gender related differences in various areas. This study particularly attempts to understand how the male and female brains function differently with respect to the everyday concepts. The authors have tried to study the differences between the thought process and the feelings with regards to the abstract concepts viz. love, freedom, responsibility, mother, and sleep.

Love, as defined, consists of variety of different feelings, attitudes, and states. These are either towards a person or an event. In this study we have operationally defined love as, "the feeling of compassion in an interpersonal relationship, the thoughts of trust and lifelong commitment in any given relationship." While referring to the 'feeling' part in the study, the authors consider the emotional state and sense of pleasure or displeasure with respect to the concepts being studied.

Freedom as defined in the Merriam- Webster dictionary is the "quality or state of being free from any constraint of choice or action. It is a state of being exempt from any coercion or restriction". The authors in the research consider freedom as any state of emotion that allows him/her to express them in a social set up. It is phenomenon that underlies the thought of being able to put forth the idea, feelings about a situation or event.

The other concept being studied here is responsibility. It means a state or fact of having a duty to deal with something or having a control over someone. The authors have tried to use responsibility as a concept of being accountable for something. It includes thoughts and feelings revolving around the situations in life that give all of us a chance of being in-charge of events in our lives. It also includes how a person thinks about holding this power with them for their everyday interactions with people at their work place, family, and any other social set up for that matter.

While trying to study what respondents think and feel about mother, the authors have considered the following aspects related to mother. This being one of the abstract concepts to define in watertight compartments, the authors have still tried to use some defining terms revolving around mother as a concept. Mother has been understood as a woman figure in the family holding an important stand in nurturing, care giving and guiding her children. The authors have tried to touch upon various aspects of thoughts and feelings related to mother.

While studying abstract concepts like love, freedom, responsibility and mother, the authors have also tried to study how males and females think and feel differently about a concept like sleep. Sleep, while defining, is a naturally recurring state of mind. It has a state of altered consciousness. There is a relative inhibition in sensory activities, voluntary muscle movements, etc. The authors here have tried to understand if there is a difference in the thoughts and feelings behind sleep and sleeping patterns.

While studying the responses of males and females of different age groups, the authors have tried to identify the factors affecting the difference, if any in their thought process and feelings in these areas.

Literature Review

The scientific studies since more than 5-6 decades have shown how men and women think differently with respect to several aspects in a human life. Social sciences try to find out the reasons why. Studying human behaviour has been one of the most interesting and equally exhausting research area till date. Although, due to advancement in technology, several psycho-physiological methods of measuring brain activity has made it easier to understand and find evidences for these differences in structure and functioning. The current study tries to examine how men and women of different age group think and feel about everyday life concepts, which in general do not have strict definitions.

Research has shown how the maps of neural circuitry are different for both the genders. Along with this, the study also tries to understand how education level and age of men and women influence the thinking process and emotional well-being in context with abstract concepts like – love, freedom, responsibility, mother and sleep. The assumption by the research authors of the current study have been supported by scientific experiments across the globe. Ragini Verma, a researcher at the University of Pennsylvania, said the greatest surprise was how much the findings supported old stereotypes, with men's brains apparently wired more for perception and co-ordinated actions, and women's for social skills and memory, making them better equipped for multitasking. Fine, who wrote 2011's *Delusions of Gender*, a book that seeks to counter propositions that sex-based differences are biologically hardwired, explained that larger brains must be organized differently to deal with increased energy demands, decrease communication times, and minimize wiring costs. A recent study by Israeli researchers that examined male and female brains found distinct differences in the developing fetus at just 26 weeks of pregnancy. The disparities could be seen when using an ultrasound scanner. The corpus callosum -- the bridge of nerve tissue that connects the right and left sides of the brain -- had a thicker measurement in female fetuses than in male foetuses (Kennedy Krieger Institute, 2015). Researchers, using brain imaging technology that captures blood flow to "working" parts of the brain, analyzed how men and women process language. All subjects listened to a novel. When males listened, only the left hemisphere of their brains was activated. The brains of female subjects, however, showed activity on both the left and right hemispheres.

Research has also tried to understand if these differences that are visible prominently since teen age, then what makes them mellow down by the age of 25 and further. Is it, that education level influences an individual to shape his/ her concepts or does it makes these concepts even stronger than before, undeterred by anything. Male and female brains showed few differences in connectivity up to the age of 13, but became more differentiated in 14- to 17-year-olds.

"It's quite striking how complementary the brains of women. Ruben Gur, a co-author on the study, said in a statement. "Detailed connective maps of the brain will not only help us better understand the differences between how men and women think, but it will also give us more insight into the roots of neurological disorders, which are often sex-related."

To all these studies, a point of limitation is mentioned by a social and developmental psychologist from the University of Melbourne, Cordelia Fine. She said that, "Male brains are, on average, larger than females and a large brain is not simply a smaller brain scaled up". She explains her argument by saying that larger brains may have different type of organisation within. It may have different ways of dealing with energy demands, communication, etc.

This argument has been supported by another research by Geary. "Women pause more, allow the other friend to speak more, offer facilitative gestures". "Women use the cerebral cortex for solving problems that require navigational skills. Men use an entirely different area, mainly the left hippocampus -- a nucleus deep inside the brain that's not activated in the women's brains during navigational tasks". He also says how the hippocampus has a different way of coding information. For example, a female may navigate a person towards a desired destination, by using landmarks like shops, historical structures and so on. However, men may use directions like east, west for navigating someone to a desired location.

Along with these everyday life situations, women are also able to show superiority in identifying emotions faster and accurately in others as compared to males who may be a bit slower in this. (Ruben Gur, PhD, a neurologist at the University of Pennsylvania). Emotional intelligence, as defined, "is the ability to recognise, one's own emotions and others' emotions. It also involves management and regulation of one's emotions." Recent research shows how women tend to regulate their emotions better than men. This is due to the larger brain area which controls the aggression and anger responses.

Differences in gender at the spatial ability also can be reasoned out due to lesser exploration by girls during middle childhood for outdoor game and activities that involve using visual-spatial ability. Partly, the environmental influences do play a role in defining or polishing or reducing the abilities in an individual. Here again, the nature versus nurture debate takes an interactionist approach to explain the difference between the two genders, not just for biological reasons, but due to psychosocial reasons too.

Methodology:

Problem:

Objectives:

1. To find out if there is a difference in the way men and women think about day – to – day concepts.
2. To understand how men and women differ in their feelings about concepts like – love, freedom, responsibility, mother and sleep.
3. To study the relationship of intermediate variables like – age, education level on the thought process and feelings of men and women about these concepts.

Hypothesis:

1. There will be a significant difference between men and women in their thoughts about day- to – day concepts.
2. There will be a significant difference between men and women in their feelings about day – to - day concepts.

3. Education and age will have a significant impact on how men and women think and feel about these concepts.
4. There will be a high correlation ship between gender, thoughts, feelings and age and education.

Sample:

The sample size used for the study was 100. The no. of female respondents was 49 and male respondents were 51. The no. of respondents from age group 17 years to 25 years was 68. This sample consisted of undergraduates. The number of respondents from the age group 25 to 60 was 32. This sample consisted of graduates and undergraduates.

Tool: The Gender Concept Questionnaire used for collecting the data was developed by the authors. It was a 20-item questionnaire with dichotomous response pattern. It consists of questions on thought process and feelings based on the five concepts. There are 4 questions for each concept – two on the thinking and two on feelings about the concept.

A pilot study was conducted with a sample of 42 with 16 no. of male respondents and 27no. of female respondents. Split-half reliability was used to determine the reliability of the test. The reliability coefficient was 0.811544. This is a highly significant value.

A panellist was appointed to establish the content validity for the 20-items questionnaire. The rating by the panel and the authors showed that all the 20 items in the test were high on content validity. Thus the test was standardized using a pilot study.

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