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WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT IN MODERN SOCIETY

Saba Mushtaq
B.S. Department of EnglishThe Cosmic Degree College for WomenUniversity of Okara

ABSTRACT

women's empowerment, emotional intelligence, and psychological development are interconnected factors that contribute to women's personal growth, social participation, and overall well-being in modern society. women's empowerment involves providing women with equal opportunities, decision-making authority, educational access, economic independence, and the freedom to determine their own lives. emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize, understand, regulate, and express emotions effectively while developing healthy relationships with others. psychological development involves the growth of self-confidence, resilience, emotional stability, personal identity, and the ability to cope with social and personal challenges. these dimensions influence one another because empowered women are often better positioned to make independent decisions, develop confidence, manage emotional difficulties, and participate actively in society. however, gender discrimination, economic dependency, unequal responsibilities, cultural restrictions, workplace challenges, and limited access to education and mental health services can create barriers to women's psychological development. this research examines the relationship between women's empowerment, emotional intelligence, and psychological development by exploring the influence of education, economic independence, social support, family relationships, and institutional opportunities. it adopts a qualitative approach based on recent academic literature and research publications from 2023 to 2026. the study highlights that empowerment is not limited to financial independence or formal rights; it also includes emotional strength, self-awareness, personal confidence, and the ability to participate meaningfully in decisions affecting one's life. the research concludes that supportive social environments, inclusive educational systems, equal economic opportunities, and emotional intelligence development can strengthen women's psychological well-being and contribute to a more equitable and progressive society.

KEYWORDS:*Women's empowerment, emotional intelligence, psychological development, mental health, self-confidence, emotional regulation, gender equality, personal growth, resilience, social participation.*

INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment has become an important subject in contemporary social, psychological, economic, and educational research because it is closely connected with individual freedom, equality, personal development, and social progress. It refers to the process through which women gain the ability, resources, confidence, and authority to make meaningful decisions about their personal, educational, professional, and family lives. In modern society, empowerment is not limited to providing women with employment or financial resources; it also involves strengthening their voices, recognizing their abilities, protecting their rights, and ensuring their participation in social and institutional decision-making. Bandara, N. A., Al-Anzi, S. M. F., Zhdanova, A., & Hirani, S. (2024). Found that,Historically, many women have faced restrictions related to education, employment, property ownership, mobility, and leadership because of traditional gender expectations. Although significant progress has been achieved in several areas, inequalities continue to influence women's opportunities and psychological experiences. Bandara et al. (2024), in their scoping review of women's empowerment and mental health, highlight the importance of understanding empowerment as a factor connected with women's psychological well-being. This relationship demonstrates that genuine empowerment must include both external opportunities and internal psychological development.Emotional intelligence is another important dimension of women's development because it influences how individuals

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VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
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understand their emotions, respond to stressful situations, communicate with others, and maintain healthy relationships. Taneri, E., & Akın-Sarı, B. (2026). Explained,It includes emotional awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and interpersonal skills. Women encounter different personal and professional responsibilities that may require them to manage complex emotional situations within families, educational institutions, workplaces, and communities. The ability to recognize and regulate emotions can support effective communication, problem-solving, confidence, and resilience. However, emotional intelligence should not be understood as an expectation that women must continuously manage other people's feelings or accept unfair responsibilities. Rather, it is a psychological capacity that enables individuals to understand their own needs, establish boundaries, make thoughtful decisions, and respond constructively to challenges. Research published in 2026 on emotional intelligence interventions suggests that developing emotional competencies can contribute to improved mental health outcomes, although results vary across interventions and study populations (Sharma et al., 2026). This makes emotional intelligence an important area of study within women's psychological development.

Psychological development refers to the continuous growth of an individual's emotional, cognitive, social, and personal capacities throughout life. For women, this development is influenced by education, family relationships, economic circumstances, cultural expectations, social acceptance, and opportunities for independent decision-making. Self-confidence, emotional stability, resilience, self-respect, and personal identity are important elements of psychological development. When women receive encouragement and equal opportunities, they may become more confident in expressing their opinions, pursuing their goals, and overcoming personal challenges. In contrast, discrimination, social restrictions, economic dependency, and unequal treatment can negatively affect self-esteem and psychological well-being. Women's empowerment can therefore create conditions that support personal growth by increasing access to resources, improving decision-making power, and strengthening a sense of control over life circumstances. Research on women's empowerment and mental health emphasizes that the relationship between empowerment and psychological well-being is complex and influenced by different social and personal factors (Bandara et al., 2024).

Education plays a central role in strengthening women's empowerment and psychological development because it provides knowledge, awareness, practical skills, and opportunities for independent participation. Educated women are generally better equipped to understand their rights, evaluate available choices, participate in decision-making, and access professional opportunities. Education can also challenge traditional assumptions that restrict women's participation in science, technology, leadership, business, and public life. Beyond formal qualifications, educational environments can develop critical thinking, communication, emotional awareness, and problem-solving abilities. These skills contribute to emotional intelligence because they help individuals understand different perspectives and respond effectively to interpersonal challenges. However, unequal access to education, financial barriers, early marriage, family restrictions, and unsafe learning environments continue to prevent some women from achieving their educational potential. An inclusive education system should therefore provide equal access and create opportunities for women to develop intellectual abilities, emotional confidence, and independent identities.Economic empowerment is equally important because financial independence can increase women's control over personal decisions and reduce vulnerability arising from economic dependency. Employment, entrepreneurship, equal wages, access to financial services, and ownership of

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productive resources can strengthen women's ability to support themselves and their families. Economic participation may also improve confidence, professional identity, social recognition, and independence in decision-making. Nevertheless, employment alone does not guarantee psychological well-being.

Women may experience work-related stress, unequal household responsibilities, workplace discrimination, limited promotion opportunities, and difficulties balancing professional and family expectations. Katiyar and Keynejad (2026), in their systematic review of gender-specific economic interventions in South Asia, examine how economic interventions relate to women's mental health and well-being. Their work highlights the importance of considering social and economic conditions together when evaluating empowerment. Consequently, effective economic empowerment requires not only access to employment but also fair working conditions, supportive policies, and opportunities for professional development.Family and social relationships also influence women's emotional intelligence and psychological development. Supportive families can encourage women to pursue education, develop professional skills, express opinions, and participate in important decisions. Respectful relationships can strengthen emotional security, confidence, and a sense of belonging. However, family pressure, unequal domestic responsibilities, gender discrimination, and restrictions on personal freedom may create emotional stress and reduce opportunities for individual growth. Working women and mothers may face additional challenges when professional responsibilities overlap with childcare, household management, and expectations of continuous emotional availability. Khalid (2025) explores how working mothers in Pakistan use agency, resilience, and emotional intelligence to cope with challenges arising from the interaction of gender, motherhood, and employment. This research provides a relevant perspective on the importance of personal agency and emotional coping within the Pakistani social context. It also demonstrates that women's psychological development should be considered in relation to the demands and support systems surrounding them.

Modern technology and digital communication have created additional opportunities for women's empowerment, education, professional participation, and social engagement. Online learning platforms, digital businesses, professional networks, and social media can help women access information, develop skills, communicate with wider communities, and establish independent sources of income. Digital environments can also provide spaces for discussing mental health, sharing experiences, and raising awareness about gender equality. However, online harassment, unrealistic social comparisons, privacy concerns, and harmful social expectations can negatively influence emotional well-being. Women may face pressure related to physical appearance, social approval, lifestyle expectations, and professional achievement. Therefore, digital empowerment requires more than access to technology; it also involves digital literacy, online safety, privacy protection, and the ability to use digital resources independently. The relationship between social participation and psychological well-being is also reflected in research by He et al. (2024), which examines social media, social capital, and women's psychological well-being within a patriarchal social structure.In contemporary society, women's empowerment, emotional intelligence, and psychological development should be understood as mutually reinforcing elements of human and social progress. Empowerment can provide women with opportunities to make decisions, participate in institutions, and develop independent identities, while emotional intelligence can support effective communication, self-regulation, and resilience. Psychological development enables

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VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
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women to recognize their abilities, manage challenges, establish personal goals, and maintain a positive sense of self. However, these outcomes cannot depend entirely on individual effort because social inequalities and institutional barriers may limit women's opportunities. Families, schools, employers, governments, and community organizations all have responsibilities in creating environments that support equality and psychological well-being. The present research examines these interconnected dimensions and emphasizes the importance of combining educational, economic, emotional, and institutional support to promote women's development in modern society.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To examine the relationship between women's empowerment, emotional intelligence, and psychological development by analysing how education, economic independence, emotional regulation, social support, and equal opportunities contribute to women's confidence, resilience, mental health, and personal growth in modern society.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. How do women's empowerment and emotional intelligence influence psychological development, self-confidence, emotional well-being, and social participation in modern society?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Women's empowerment has been examined extensively in contemporary research as a multidimensional process involving personal autonomy, social participation, economic independence, access to resources, and decision-making authority. Researchers increasingly recognize that empowerment cannot be measured only through employment or educational achievement because women may possess formal opportunities while continuing to experience restrictions within families, workplaces, and communities. Asia, M. (2025). Found that, Effective empowerment requires the ability to make meaningful choices, exercise personal agency, and participate in decisions that influence everyday life. Bandara et al. (2024), in their scoping review, examine the relationship between women's empowerment and mental health and emphasize the need to understand women's psychological experiences alongside their social circumstances. Their review provides an important foundation for examining empowerment as a factor that may influence emotional well-being, confidence, and personal development. It also indicates that empowerment is a complex concept whose psychological effects may differ according to social environment, individual circumstances, and the forms of support available to women.A significant part of the literature focuses on the relationship between economic independence and women's psychological well-being. Financial resources can increase women's ability to make personal decisions, access healthcare, pursue education, support family needs, and participate in social activities. Syed, M. K., Hanan, M. A., Mehmood, T., Hamid, M. S., Farhan, M., & Subhan, W. (2026explained, Economic independence may also strengthen self-confidence by allowing women to develop professional identities and exercise greater control over their lives. However, employment and income do not automatically eliminate gender inequality. Women

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VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
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may continue to face unequal wages, occupational segregation, limited leadership opportunities, workplace discrimination, and disproportionate unpaid care responsibilities.

Emotional intelligence is widely discussed as an important psychological capacity that supports self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and interpersonal communication. Individuals with stronger emotional competencies may be better equipped to recognize emotional reactions, manage stress, understand different perspectives, and respond constructively to interpersonal difficulties. For women, these capacities can support personal decision-making, professional relationships, family communication, and psychological resilience. However, emotional intelligence should not be confused with emotional self-sacrifice or the expectation that women must always remain patient and accommodating. Healthy emotional intelligence also involves recognizing personal limits, expressing disagreement respectfully, and seeking assistance when necessary. Sharma et al. (2026), in their systematic review and meta-analysis of emotional intelligence interventions, examined 32 adult studies and reported improvements in mental health outcomes following emotional intelligence-based interventions. The authors also identified substantial variation among studies, indicating that further research is required to establish which intervention approaches are most effective. This evidence supports the relevance of emotional intelligence development while encouraging careful interpretation of its effects.The relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological development is also important in understanding how women respond to personal and professional challenges. Emotional awareness can help individuals recognize stress, identify personal needs, and make decisions without being overwhelmed by immediate emotional reactions. Self-regulation can support the management of frustration and anxiety, while empathy can improve communication and strengthen social relationships. Emotional competencies may also contribute to resilience by helping individuals adapt to difficult circumstances and recover from setbacks. Cannavò et al. (2024) examined relationships between trait emotional intelligence, life satisfaction, depressive symptoms, and post-traumatic responses among women with breast cancer. Their research illustrates how emotional intelligence can be relevant to psychological adjustment and well-being during challenging life experiences. Although the findings arise from a specific health context and should not be generalized to all women, they demonstrate the importance of examining emotional competencies as part of psychological development and mental health.

Another important theme in the literature concerns the influence of social support and community relationships on women's empowerment. Social support can provide emotional security, practical assistance, encouragement, and opportunities for participation. Women who receive respect and encouragement from family members, colleagues, friends, and community organizations may find it easier to pursue personal goals and overcome barriers. Social relationships can also strengthen a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation. He et al. (2024) investigated the relationship between social media, social capital, and women's psychological well-being within a patriarchal social structure. Their study draws attention to the importance of social connections and the wider environment in understanding women's experiences. The literature indicates that empowerment should not be treated only as an individual achievement; supportive relationships and inclusive communities can play an important role in helping women develop confidence, agency, and psychological stability.Research on working women and mothers highlights the interaction between empowerment, emotional intelligence, and the demands of multiple social roles. Many women manage professional responsibilities alongside childcare, household work, and family

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VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
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expectations. When these responsibilities are not distributed fairly, women may experience work-family conflict, stress, exhaustion, and reduced opportunities for personal development. At the same time, supportive workplaces, shared family responsibilities, flexible employment arrangements, and access to childcare can strengthen women's ability to manage different roles. Khalid (2025) studied coping strategies among working mothers in Pakistan and highlighted agency, resilience, and emotional intelligence as important resources for managing challenges arising from gender, motherhood, and employment. This research is particularly valuable because it provides context-specific insight into the experiences of Pakistani working mothers. It also suggests that psychological development is influenced by both individual capabilities and the social conditions in which women live and work.The literature further emphasizes the importance of education and institutional opportunities in promoting women's psychological development. Education can improve awareness of rights, increase professional knowledge, develop communication skills, and strengthen the ability to make independent decisions. Educational institutions can also provide supportive environments in which women develop leadership abilities, critical thinking, emotional awareness, and confidence. However, social restrictions, financial difficulties, gender discrimination, and unequal access to technology may limit these opportunities. Institutions therefore need to move beyond formal admission policies and create environments in which women can participate meaningfully and safely. Access to mentorship, career guidance, leadership training, and psychological support can further strengthen personal and professional development. The available literature suggests that education and institutional inclusion are most effective when they are connected with broader efforts to reduce social inequalities and strengthen women's agency.

METHODOLOGY

The present research adopts a qualitative research methodology to examine the relationship between women's empowerment, emotional intelligence, and psychological development in modern society. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the subject involves personal experiences, emotional capacities, social relationships, cultural expectations, and individual perceptions of empowerment. The study focuses on understanding how women experience independence, develop emotional competencies, respond to psychological challenges, and participate in family, educational, professional, and community environments. Rather than considering empowerment only in terms of economic resources or formal rights, the research explores its psychological and social dimensions. This approach makes it possible to examine how external opportunities and internal emotional capacities interact in shaping women's personal growth and well-being.The research is based on secondary sources of information, including academic journal articles, systematic reviews, research papers, scholarly publications, and relevant institutional studies published between 2023 and 2026. Particular attention is given to literature concerning women's empowerment, emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, economic independence, social support, mental health, and the experiences of working women. Sources are selected according to their relevance to the research objectives, academic credibility, publication period, and contribution to understanding the relationship between the three central concepts. Recent studies from South Asia and other international contexts are included to provide a broader perspective and to recognize that women's experiences may differ according to cultural, economic, and institutional circumstances.A descriptive and analytical research approach is used to explore the major factors influencing women's empowerment and psychological development. The

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descriptive component identifies important dimensions such as educational access, employment, financial independence, decision-making authority, emotional awareness, and social support.

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of the selected literature indicates that women's empowerment is closely associated with personal autonomy, decision-making opportunities, social participation, and psychological well-being. Access to education, employment, financial resources, and supportive institutions can strengthen women's ability to make choices and exercise control over important aspects of their lives. However, empowerment is not automatically achieved through income or employment because social restrictions, unequal responsibilities, and limited institutional support may continue to affect women's experiences. Bandara et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of examining women's empowerment in relation to mental health, while Katiyar and Keynejad (2026) highlight the relevance of economic interventions to women's well-being in South Asia. The analysis therefore suggests that empowerment requires both access to external resources and the freedom to use those resources meaningfully A second major theme concerns the contribution of emotional intelligence to psychological development. Emotional awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and effective communication can help women manage personal challenges, maintain relationships, and respond constructively to stressful situations. These competencies may support confidence and resilience, particularly when women experience pressure arising from professional, family, or social responsibilities. Sharma et al. (2026) reviewed 32 studies of emotional intelligence interventions among adults and reported improvements in mental health outcomes, including positive psychological indicators.

FINDINGS

The research finds that women's empowerment contributes to psychological development by strengthening autonomy, self-confidence, personal identity, and decision-making ability. Educational access, financial independence, employment opportunities, and participation in social institutions can provide women with greater control over their lives. However, empowerment cannot be measured only through economic achievement because women may continue to experience discrimination, unequal responsibilities, and restrictions on personal choices. The reviewed literature indicates that social and institutional support is essential for translating available opportunities into meaningful empowerment. It also highlights that improvements in women's mental health require attention to the social and economic conditions that influence their everyday experiences.The findings further indicate that emotional intelligence can support women's psychological well-being by improving emotional awareness, regulation, empathy, communication, and resilience. These abilities can help women manage stress, maintain healthy relationships, respond to difficulties, and make thoughtful decisions. The research also identifies the importance of supportive family environments, respectful workplaces, and accessible mental health services in strengthening emotional development. However, emotional intelligence alone cannot remove the effects of structural inequality or social discrimination. It is most beneficial when women have the freedom, resources, and social support needed to apply their emotional competencies in everyday life.Finally, the study finds that women's empowerment, emotional intelligence, and

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VOL 01 | No. 1 | 2026
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psychological development are interconnected dimensions that can contribute to broader social progress..

CONCLUSION

Women's empowerment, emotional intelligence, and psychological development are essential components of individual well-being and social progress in modern society. Empowerment provides women with opportunities, resources, independence, and decision-making authority, while emotional intelligence supports self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and effective communication. Psychological development brings these dimensions together through the growth of self-confidence, resilience, personal identity, and the ability to manage life's challenges. The research demonstrates that these concepts are closely connected and that progress in one area can support development in others. Nevertheless, their relationship is influenced by social expectations, economic circumstances, family relationships, educational opportunities, and institutional conditions.The study concludes that meaningful women's empowerment requires more than formal rights or access to employment. Women also need safe environments, fair opportunities, supportive relationships, financial independence, and the freedom to make decisions about their personal and professional lives. Emotional intelligence can strengthen their ability to understand emotions, communicate effectively, and respond to difficult circumstances, but it should not replace institutional responsibility or be used to justify unequal social expectations. Families, educational institutions, employers, and policymakers must therefore work together to reduce discrimination, promote equal participation, and support women's psychological well-being..

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