Factors That Determine The Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance Of Private University Leturers in Malaysia

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Abstract— **Considering the important role of emotional intelligence in determining the performance of professionals in organizations and the need for enhancing teaching effectiveness in the classroom, this study intends to describe the factors that determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and the academic performance of academic staff in private educational institutions in Malaysia. In the current study, investigating emotional intelligence and its relationship with academic performance will add empirical literature to the corpus knowledge of this topic, help the lecturers in understanding more on the importance of soft skills. It will also assist the lecturer in considering the challenges of modern knowledge and, ultimately, improve their performance through effective teaching and learning processes.**

Keywords— **Emotional Intelligence, Academic Performance, Private University, Relationship.**

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I. Introduction

For the past decade, the higher education sector in Malaysia has grown tremendously and Malaysia aims to be a centre of educational excellence in the region, especially through the internationalization of higher education[1]. A recent launch of "Strategic Plan for Higher Education: Laying the Foundation Beyond 2020" by the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) Malaysia outlines the measures and strategies that will create Malaysia into an international centre of educational excellence[2]. The plan has incorporated educators as active agents of change in gearing Malaysia toward the goal[3]. The initiative provides a basis for understanding nation-building and community development. Hence, the government needs to prepare practical tools and formulate strategies accordingly[4].

The Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia is aggressively pursuing its goal to ensure the quality of learning via teaching, enable students to get the latest knowledge through exploratory research, and sustain the development of societies [2]. Therefore, it is necessary to implement appropriate teaching strategies and to organize work in a way that fosters learning. For that reason, providing trained educators is essential for the education system. Talented academic staff and academic leaders in higher education are expected to have high emotional intelligence (EI). Having good emotional intelligence will increase the job performance of academic staff[5].

Lecturers are overwhelmed with multiple roles and tasks such as conducting research for promotion purposes, attending seminars, project presentations and engaging in students' and community service activities[6]. Among the organizational stress indicators include workload, ambiguity, and conflict in roles[7]. Subsequently, lecturers tend to experience negative emotions such as tension, hostility, depression, anger, nervousness, and frustration[8]. Therefore, it is vital for lecturers not only to possess appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities to ensure the optimum transfer of knowledge but to equip themselves with another pertinent aspect of the teaching component called emotional intelligence.

In academia, the quality of teaching is closely related to teaching effectiveness. High skills of emotional intelligence have a positive and significant relationship with effective teaching[9]. EI components support teaching effectiveness and productivity for academic staff. However, there is still a gap regarding the insufficient understanding of the importance of studying emotional intelligence and its effectiveness on improving teaching effectiveness among academic lecturers. It plays a major role to evolve strategic competence in organizations[10].

II. Literature Review

A. Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance

The concept of academic performance has been studied most in the educational field. Scholars mostly examined the cognitive factors including teaching and learning that are related to academic performance[11]. The most recent studies on academic performance are focused on the influence of personality traits and factors on academic achievement[12]. Guided by a theoretical focus on emotional abilities, a large portion of research found the influence of emotional intelligence on academic performance[13]. Hence, emotional intelligence has emerged as a strong predictor in the field of education.

Previous studies provided ample evidence that emotional intelligence is positively associated with academic performance. Based on Goleman's (1998) model of emotional intelligence, academic performance could be increased through social and emotional learning programs. A meta-analysis study by Durlak et al. (2011), for instance, shows that educational learning programs that incorporate social and emotional elements result in improvement of academic performance.

Although there is no clear differentiation for mixed emotional intelligence versus ability model, a study conducted by MacCann et al. (2020) supports the hypothesis that emotional intelligence is positively associated with academic performance. Nonetheless, they also proposed that "ability emotional intelligence will show stronger prediction of performance as compared to self-rated or mixed emotional intelligence" (p. 155). They further elaborated that emotional intelligence has a possible relationship with academic performance through three mechanisms.

Firstly, emotional intelligence positively contributes to students' abilities in dealing with negative emotions within an academic environment. Some specific circumstances related to academic settings include disappointment of lower test scores, negative feedbacks from teachers or peers, and occasional boredom in learning[14]. In this sense, emotionally intelligent students will be able to cope with stressful environment and anxiety towards negative emotions.

Secondly, emotional intelligence significantly influences students' ability in managing their social demands in academic surroundings. Some specific social demands include sharing with friends, resisting peer pressures, managing group projects, and adjusting to the new learning environment. In this regard, emotionally intelligent students will be able to manage the social environment around them and form a better relationship with all people including peers, teachers, and family members. Hence, emotional intelligence plays a significant role in developing social relationships among students[15].

Thirdly, students' emotional competencies are overlapping with intellectual competencies. In a way, students' abilities to deal with academic pressures and social environment show their intellectual competencies to express their emotions or feelings and communicate with others. Therefore, teaching emotional competencies for students will automatically improve their academic competencies. For example, when a teacher teaches the language of emotions to the students, it may increase their vocabularies and spelling abilities in general. Similarly, when a teacher intervenes the students with written texts, it may improve their reading comprehension in particular. In this sense, emotionally intelligent students are most likely good in academic performance[16].

B. *Objective of Study*

The main objective of this study is to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and academic performance among academic staff in Malaysian private universities. Specifically, the objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the influence of self-awareness on academic performance among academic staff in Malaysian private universities.
2. To explore the influence of self-management on academic performance among academic staff in Malaysian private universities.
3. To investigate the influence of social awareness on academic performance among academic staff in Malaysian private universities.
4. To determine the influence of relationship management on academic performance among academic staff in Malaysian private universities.

C. *Hypotheses*

H01:There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and academic performance among academic staff in Malaysian private universities.
H1:There is a significant relationship between self-awareness and academic performance among academic staff in Malaysian private universities.

H02:There is no significant relationship between self-management and academic performance among academic staff in Malaysian private universities.
H2:There is a significant relationship between self-management and academic performance among academic staff in Malaysian private universities.

H03:There is no significant relationship between social awareness and academic performance among academic staff in Malaysian private universities.
H3:There is a significant relationship between social awareness and academic performance among academic staff in Malaysian private universities.

H04:There is no significant relationship between relationship management and academic performance among academic staff in Malaysian private universities.
H4:There is a significant relationship between relationship management and academic performance among academic staff in Malaysian private universities.

D. *Research Framework*

There are four major dimensions of emotionally intelligent individuals should have in order to obtain better academic performance. They are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.

According to this conception, emotional intelligence could predict academic performance. Individuals with a high level of emotional intelligence would succeed in applying their knowledge and improve their academic performance. On the other hand, individuals with a low level of emotional intelligence would be struggling to transform their knowledge and increase their performance[17]. It can be indicated that all four dimensions of Goleman's (2001) emotional competence significantly correlate with academic performance. Hence, the conceptual framework of emotional intelligence and academic performance is presented in Figure 1 below.
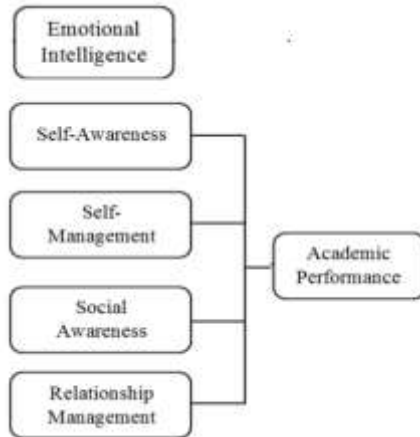

Figure 1: Framework of Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance

III. Methodology

The main approach that used for this study was quantitative research design with the application of a cross-sectional survey method or questionnaire. This method is considered suitable based on the identification of the phenomenon and the objectives of the study i.e., to see the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance among private university lecturers in Malaysia. According to Haslam and McGarty (2014), the survey method is also known as a correlational method because it is used to acquire information about several distinct variables in which the researcher is interested and finds the relationship between variables. The survey method in this study establishes the sampling strategy, data gathering methodologies, and validation processes.

In line with the objectives of the study, the target population for this study were private universities in Malaysia. There are about 54 private universities in Malaysia distributed across 11 states. Most private universities are in the state of Selangor (23 universities). It is followed by the states of Kuala Lumpur (14 universities), Perak (4 universities), Kedah (3 universities), Negeri Sembilan (3 universities), and Pahang (2 universities). The states of Johor, Melaka, Pulau Pinang, Terengganu, and Sarawak each has one private university only. While the states of Putrajaya, Perlis, and Sabah do not

have any private universities operational (MOHE, 2019).This study utilised sampling frame and sample selection based on the available data. In terms of the sampling frame, the total population size is 54 private universities in Malaysia with 2574 teaching professionals. Hence, out of 2574 teaching professionals, 370 lecturers selected to answer the questionnaire of the study.

For the sampling procedure, 6 (six) universities selected out of 54 private universities in Malaysia. The selection criteria are mainly based on mature universities and emerging universities following SETARA 2017 rating developed under the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 for Higher Education. SETARA system assesses educational institutions by using a rigorous methodology in evaluating three categories, namely teaching and learning, research, and services as the core functions of the university. According to the Education Malaysia Global Services (2021), the latest exercise for SETARA rating was in 2017. The primary data collection technique will be a questionnaire. The questionnaire distributed to lecturers, senior lecturers, associate professors, and professors who are involved in academic teaching only at selected private universities in Malaysia.

Prior to distributing the questionnaires to the targeted respondents, the researcher obtained permission from the targeted private universities in Malaysia. Once the targeted respondents are determined, the researcher contacted them and explain the purpose of the study to help them understand and encourage the responses completely.

A. Pilot Study

A pilot testing will be conducted to develop the questionnaire. The instruments will be distributed to 20 lecturers at selected private universities in Malaysia. Based on the obtained data, the reliability and validity of the questions from the questionnaire will be tested accordingly. The reliability of the instrument will be checked using Cronbach's alpha to determine its internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha that is higher than .7 shows adequate internal reliability of an instrument.

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IV. **Result and Discussion**

This research questionnaire consisted of four sections namely Section A, Section B, Section C and Section D. Section B, which consisted of questions related to the four dimensions of Emotional Intelligence, have an internal consistency of more than 0.7. Section C and Section D had an internal consistency of more than 0.90. Thus, the researcher concluded that the data collection instrument for this research was excellently reliable.

KMO and Bartlett's Test[a]		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.761
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	681.920
	df	190
	Sig.	.000
a. Based on correlations		

Table 1: The Coefficient Alpha Value Generated in SPSS (n=40)

	Variables	Scales	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Emotional Intelligence	Self-Awareness	0.74
2		Self-Management	0.72
3		Social Awareness	0.80
4		Relationship Management	0.78
5	Academic Performance	Research and scholarly activities	0.92
6		Teaching Activities	0.96

The internal reliability for Section B, Section C and Section D were assessed and the result varied, ranging from 0.74-0.96 (Table 1). The Emotional Intelligence four dimensions has good reliability where the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was more than 0.70.

A. *Factor Analysis*

In this research pilot's study, a total of 40 people participated to be the sample. There were 30 questions with five-point Likert scale as the choices of answers. The Likert scale stand from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. By using IBM SPSS Version 26, the EFA of the data was computed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity were used to assess sampling adequacies and to establish the applicability of exploratory factor analysis to components analysis. The KMO index was used to compare zero-order and partial correlation coefficients.

For the entire set of measures, the KMO and Bartlett's Test were reasonable. The KMO test demonstrated a result of 0.761 for Emotional Intelligence dimension and 0.884 for academic performance dimension, which was higher than the minimum level of 0.6. In addition, Table 2 shows that the significance of the Bartlett's Tests was 0.000, which is less than the significant level of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the correlation matrix contained significant and meaningful information. Since there was a correlation between research variables based on this result, hence, Factor Analysis could be conducted.

1. **Emotional intelligence**

2. **Academic Performance**

KMO and Bartlett's Test[a]		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.884
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	456.966
	df	45
	Sig.	.000
a. Based on correlations		

B. *Correlation Analysis*

In this study, the statistical techniques of correlation and regression analysis were used to examine the hypothetical assumptions between the two variables: research activities and teaching activities. The correlation coefficient (r) is a measurement of strength of a link between two variables, with r values ranging from +1 to -1. As a result, -1 denotes a perfectly downhill negative relationship, while +1 denotes a perfectly uphill positive relationship. On the other hand, -0.70 denotes a strong downhill negative relationship, while +0.70 denotes a strong uphill positive relationship. Lastly, -0.50 denotes a moderate downhill negative relationship, +0.05 denotes a moderate downhill positive relationship, while 0 denotes no linear relationship.

The correlation analysis between the three variables is shown in Table 4.25. With a level of significance at $p < 0.01$, the results clearly revealed that there was a positive association between the variables of research activities and teaching activities.. In particular, research activities had a significant positive link (more than r=0.80); and teaching activities also had a significant positive relationship (more than r =0.700). Because of the importance of the two variables

to the academic performance of private university Malaysia, these two characteristics should be consistently stressed by emotional intelligence.

Variables		Research Activities	Teaching Activities
Self Awareness	Pearson Correlation	0.803**	0.700**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	380	380
Self Management	Pearson Correlation	0.830**	0.716**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	380	380
Social Awareness	Pearson Correlation	0.821**	0.714**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	380	380
Relationship Management	Pearson Correlation. Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.831** 0.000 380	0.666** 0.000 380

** Correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is strong positive correlation was found between self awareness, self management, social awareness and relationship management towards academic performance..

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, findings of this study suggest that lecturers' with high emotional intelligence are more likely to perform well in their job. The results have some important implications in both academic and emotional. Practically, this study demonstrates that teaching professions requires certain level of emotional intelligence. In this regard, designing appropriate training programs to improve lecturers' emotional intelligence is worthwhile.

The objective of this study was to find the connection between the factors of emotional intelligence and related to this it was found that there is a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and academic performance of private university lecturers Malaysia. This result indicates that the faculty members should consider more focus towards the emotional development of the students along with the intellectual development. In such case, it will be like overall development of the students. This development will furthermore help in the growth of opportunities in the career prospect.

A. *Limitations and Future Studies*

The This study has some limitations in terms of sample size, research methodology, and potential biases.

Sample Size. The current study will only select six sampling units out of 54 private universities in Malaysia. This will limit other universities and educational institutions to be included in the sampling procedure. Hence, the outcomes might not be able to generalize to other populations such as public universities.

Research Methodology. The current study will use a quantitative research approach through a survey questionnaire. This will limit the use of other methods in the process of data collection and analysis. Therefore, qualitative research methods and analyses are excluded from this study.

Potential Biases. This can be considered as another limitation of the study to prove that the responses from the respondents are honest and the analyses are correct. Therefore, the data will be quantitatively analyzed using correlation and multiple regression analysis to avoid the potential impact of the researcher's personal bias on the result of the current proposed study.

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