Research Paper

The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Student’s Academic Performance: A Study on Malaysian Tertiary Institution

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence combines the important aspects of interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, adaptability, moods and stress management skills, which have an effect on students’ academic performance. Thus, this study was carried out with the aim of examining the impact of emotional intelligence on students’ academic performance of information technology and business management students. The independent variable includes self-awareness, self-motivation, empathy, emotional management and interpersonal skills while the depended variable is academic performance. This research adopted descriptive and explanatory research design. It also employ the use of cross sectional survey method using a survey questionnaires that contains 40 items with Likert Scale (Disagree-1 and 5 for Agree). The sample of 123 students from FTMS College, Cyberjaya and Erican College were selected using convenient sampling. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive means and regression via SPSS19. The Pearson’s correlation coefficients of the five dependent variables have significant positive correlation with students’ academic performance. However, using the regress analysis only two variable were significant and they include; empathy and self-motivation. Hence, the study concluded that only the independent variable of empathy and motivation has a strong influence on academic performance of

KEY TERMS: Emotional Intelligence, Academic performance, self-awareness, self-motivation, empathy, emotional management and interpersonal skill, information technology, business management.

1. Introduction
Most of the problem one encounter’s in life be it personal, social, educational or political are caused by how one interprets emotions by the those involved (Mishra, 2012). It is important for students in the tertiary institutions to be aware that their ability or inability to control to their emotions will directly impact their academic performance.

Presently, EI has become an interesting aspect for researchers in various fields which include education, management and psychology from continent such as Europe, US and Asia (Brown & Moshavi, 2005; Morris, Urbanski & Fuller, 2005).

Studies on EI carried out in Malaysia were focused on student’s academic performance in secondary schools (Hashim et al, 2012). Just a few has been done in tertiary institution and the researcher’s respondents were on medical students (Hassan, Azhar, and Chew, 2013). Therefore, this research will be pinned down to Management, Arts and Information Technology (IT) students of FTMS University College and Erican College both in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

The objectives of this research are as follows;

- To examine the impact of self-awareness on students’ academic performance
- To examine the impact self-motivation on students’ academic performance
- To examine the impact of empathy on students’ academic performance
- To examine the impact of emotional management on students’ academic performance
- To examine the impact of interpersonal skill on students’ academic performance

2. Literature Review

There are some factors that can cause a student either to have high or low performance. Among that dysfunction personality is part of the composition of the formation of emotional intelligence which is the reason for students’ low grade performance. The student that has dysfunctional characteristic such as lack of confidence, possess low self-esteem, lack of self-control and have a high anxiety are said to have a low emotional intelligence, and this will affect their academic performance.

From the research of Petrides et al (2004) they looked at the relationship between trait emotional intelligence, academic performance and cognitive, they discovered that emotional intelligence moderated the relationship between academic performance and cognitive ability. Parker et al (2004) in their studied concluded that different variable of emotional intelligence used as predictors of academic success. They found that highly successful students scored higher than unsuccessful group on three subsets of emotional intelligence (interpersonal ability, stress management and adaptability). Also, in a study carried out by Rode et al. (2007), they predicted that emotional intelligence was related to academic performance for two reasons. Firstly, academic performance involves a great deal of uncertainty. Secondly, majority of academic work is self-directed, requiring high levels of self-management. Thus, students that possess high emotional intelligence would perform better academically. Svetlana (2007), suggests the need to incorporate emotional intelligence training into secondary education curricula, due to a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement.

Relationship between Self-Awareness and Academic Performance

Self-awareness is to inform oneself of the interest to identify feelings and how it affects performance. This self-awareness is the key to alert a student or anyone about their strength and weakness. By possessing self-awareness, that is being able to know ones capability makes
such student to obtain self-confidence. According to Johnson (2009) he stated that emotional health is a fundamental part of effective learning. The most critical element of a student's success is for such student to have an understanding of how to learn. Students that possess the ability of self-awareness and intrinsically motivated will definitely have high academic performance. While students which do not have a good self-awareness and lack intrinsic motivation will tend to have low academic score at the end of the semester or academic year.

**Relationship between Emotional Management and Academic Performance**

From the classroom perspective, self-control on cognitive and behavior are essential aspects of learning and academic performance (Corno and Mandinach, 1983; and Corno & Rohrkemper, 1985). Most students if not all will experience frustration and failure to attain their academic goals. This is because they depend on the strength of fortitude to control their negative thoughts and feelings. When students are able to control emotions, they will be able to achieve the academic goals as well (Dweck et al, 1995). Also, in a study conducted by Walter Mischel on children aged 4 years. It was found that those who could control the impulses of action have shown their ability in achieving good academic and good social skills when they are in their adolescence (Shoda, Mischel, and Peake, 1990). The results suggest that better academic performance might be achieved by targeting skills relation to emotion management and being able to cope in difficult situations.

**Relationship between Empathy and Academic Performance**

Empathy is the ability of an individual to show concern for the needs of their colleague. Cooper (2010), gave the definition of empathy as the most powerful aspect for the development of learning relationships and achievement of gifted students; empathy is usually communicated nonverbally via facial expressions and body language (Wang, 2014). Empathizing with fellow students who can read or understand non-verbal signs such as voice intonation, facial expression and so forth has an impact students’ academic performance. In a study done by Chow (2006), it was concluded that student’s levels of empathy have a positive relationship with their academic motivation thus helping to increase their academic performance.

**Relationship between Self-Motivation and Academic Performance**

According to Bernard (1965), motivation is the driving force that involves the raise, maintain and control the interest. He said that this emotional intelligence variable of motivation is very important to encourage students to actively engage in the activities of teaching and learning, interested in encouraging students to continue learning to create a fun learning process. However, in this study the motivation is centered on self-motivation. Self-motivation happens to be one the key variable of emotional intelligence which gives a boost in improving students’ academic performance. In the context of this research, self-motivation focuses on students interested to study and understand their leaning goals and objectives for attaining good academic performance. Self-motivation is connected with ones emotions. Emotions affect the way a person responds against another person and also to their environment, ultimately it determines the pattern of adjustment that will be taken in their lives (Kamarudin, 1989).

According to Sikwari (2014), there is a significant correlation between academic achievement and self-motivation. This was also supported by the findings of Tella (2007) whom through his research said that there is significant relationship between students’ self-motivation and academic performance in secondary school in mathematics with respect to gender. In Tella (2007) research, he found out that highly motivated students usually performed better academically than those students who experience low motivation. Sikwari (2014) stated that male students have less self-motivation as compared to their female colleagues.
Low academic performance can be linked to social problems and emotions encountered by students, especially about the ability to use social skills to get support from teachers (MacMullin, 1994). As the social environment in which learning occurs can strengthen or eliminate behaviors that lead to academic achievement, the acquisition of interpersonal skills is very important to attain excellence in learning. Students who have not gained mastery of the skills of interpersonal relationship with their peers, those who often behave badly and eventually lead to poor academic performance (Sulzer-Azaraff and Mayer, 1986). From a study done by Stephen N. Elliot, a psychology professor at Wisconsin University, USA, found out that students who enrolled in social skills from the period 1996-1997, showed an increase in social skills which in turns leads to an increase in their academic performance. This result was also supported by Johnson (2009), he proposed that emotional intelligence (like interpersonal skills) enables the students to develop good relationship and to possess social support which also help students to perform excellently well in their examinations.

**H1:** There is a significant relationship between students' academic performance and student's self-awareness.

**H2:** There is a significant relationship between emotional management and students' academic performance.

**H3:** There is significant relationship between empathy and students' academic performance

**H4:** There is significant relationship between students' self-motivation and academic performance.

**H5:** There is a significant relationship between student's interpersonal skills and academic performance.

![Conceptual Framework](image-url)

**FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**
H6: There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and students’ academic performance.

3. Research Design and Methodology

This research was done using a quantitative method and also a primary data was collected from students. In order to be in line with the quantitative approach chosen for this thesis, the medium through which data will be collected from respondents will be via questionnaire. This is to enable the researcher to gather a primary data from respondents that are selected in the University of Choice stated above.

This thesis focuses on two departments of the schools involved. This is because this is the area in which research has not been done in Malaysia. This is the Information technology (IT) and Management department. Secondly, the researcher chose these departments as it has more number of students in both college as compared to other departments. A total of 150 questionnaires will be distributed in both colleges by means of direct contact of face to face with the respondents. The questionnaire is divided into two sections, section A comprises of demographic of the respondents such as (age, gender, departments, race, nationality) while section B covers the targeted questions to carry out the whole investigation. The respondents vary from first semester students to completing students. This research uses a convenient sampling. This is because respondents are willing to part-take in the research, thereby making it more appropriate for this research than any other form of sampling.

This study analysed the data collected through the use of quantitative analysis. This is because statistical analysis give the researcher the opportunity to get descriptive information through mean outputs (Carrol, 1991) and standard deviation will help to investigate if the mean is in line with the view (Saundra, et al, 2007). A regression coefficient will be collected through SPSS analysis that helps the researcher to investigate if the variable of emotional intelligence has an impact on students’ academic performance. Also a two tailed analyses will be used also to check the relationship of the variables and student academic performance.

4. Results and Discussion

This research performed a regression analysis using SPSS to predict the impact of emotional intelligence on academic performance based on the five independent variables of emotional intelligence. The dependent factor in this study is academic performance.

The Model Summary table below predicts that academic performance shows R as 0.654, R impact of emotional intelligence components on academic performance in Malaysia Tertiary institutions (with reference to management and information technology department) squares as 0.428 and adjusted R Square 0.403, indicating that only 40.3% of the variance of emotional intelligence can be predicted by the independent variables of self-awareness, self-motivation, empathy, emotional management and interpersonal skills. Nevertheless, the general accepted rule for regression to be a good fit is considered to predict at least 60% variation of the dependent variable (Zygmont & Smith, 2014). Thus, this model for this research is considered to be a poor fit as it only predict just 40% of the entire model. Nevertheless, the autocorrelation of this regression is potentially very high. Also, with a good F test value, it shows that the regression model is significant.
The Beta Coefficients table below is used for testing the hypotheses above. The summary of hypotheses test results is provided in which follows.

### Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Collinearity Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>1.323</td>
<td>.338</td>
<td>3.812</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>-0.026</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>0.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Motivation</td>
<td>0.345</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>3.350</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>0.359</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>3.562</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional Management</td>
<td>-0.165</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>-1.644</td>
<td>0.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpersonal Skills</td>
<td>0.148</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>1.483</td>
<td>0.148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

### Hypotheses Test Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Beta coefficient</th>
<th>Significant (P&lt;0.05)</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>H1: There is a significant relationship between student's academic performance and student's self-awareness.</td>
<td>-0.025</td>
<td>0.794 Not significant</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>H2: There is a significant relationship between emotional management and students' academic performance.</td>
<td>-0.153</td>
<td>0.103 Not Significant</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>H3: There is significant relationship between empathy and students' academic performance.</td>
<td>0.374</td>
<td>0.001 Significant</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>H4: There is significant relationship between students' self-motivation and academic performance.</td>
<td>0.350</td>
<td>0.001 Significant</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>H5: There is a significant relationship between student's interpersonal skills and academic performance.</td>
<td>0.150</td>
<td>0.146 Not Significant</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a positive and significant influence on self-motivation and academic performance of students in Malaysia tertiary institutions. From this researched it is perceived that self-
motivation is one of the key factors that plays an important role in influence the performance of students in Malaysia tertiary institutions. This is in corroboration with other researches done in the past; in these researches it was found out those pupils that have self-motivation orientation had better and higher score in reading and mathematics and also achieved higher overall score as compared to their fellow students that does not have self-motivation instead extrinsic motivation.

Also this research concludes that there is a significant and positive relationship between student’s emotional intelligence construct of empathy and academic performance of students. This is in connection with other research. In these studies it was showed that low levels of empathy are connected with poor academic performance. When two students who have intellectual intelligence (that is having the same IQ) but different empathy skills, found that student’s that possess higher empathy ability gets better grades.

According to this research this on emotional intelligence and students’ academic performance it has shown that there is no significant influence of the emotional intelligence constructs of self-awareness of self-awareness, emotional management and interpersonal skills. These conclusions are contrary to past research which linked these three constructs to have a significant and positive impact on academic performance of students. However, by concluding this way, it is important for further research to be carried out on these constructs to investigate if they are combined with other emotional intelligent constructs they can have an impact on academic performance of tertiary students in the management and information technology departments.

5. Conclusion

In summary, it is concluded according to this research that only empathy and self-motivation has stronger influence (as in seen in the mean figures, correlation and regression analysis) on the academic performance of Malaysia tertiary institution in the management and information technology departments. It is found that while self-awareness, emotional management and interpersonal skill has a weak influence (as seen only in the mean and correlation figures) on the academic performance of Malaysia tertiary institution in the management and information technology departments. Thus, this study recommends that students who want to excel in their academic pursuit in Malaysia should take notes of their emotions intelligence (with special reference to their empathy and self-motivation skills).

Therefore it is important for Malaysian tertiary institutions to organize seminars either semester or yearly to enable students have a better understanding of their emotions or how it influences their education and academic performance. With these seminars in schools students will be encouraged to learn much about themselves and their emotions. By so doing they will be vast and have a better knowledge of their emotions thereby increasing their emotional intelligence. Hence as students continuous to understand the influence of emotional intelligence (self-motivation and empathy), their academic performance begin to improve which will eventually lead to them to graduate with a better CGPA (Cumulative Grade Point Average).As universities to continue graduate students yearly with better cumulative grade point average (CGPA) this will impact the universities education reputation that might call for global recognition and acceptance.

Reference


Svetlana, H. (2007) Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement in Higher Education. Pepperdine University

