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INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TOWARDS ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG TESL TEACHER TRAINEES IN MALAYSIA INSTITUTE OF TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Teacher trainees need to be well equipped to face the 21ˢᵗ Century education. Emotional characteristics of teachers emerged to be significantly important as their intellectual development in order to overcome the future obstacles and challenges in the proffesion.Emotional intelligence is the ability to manage emotions. It is discussed on four dimensions namely self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, regulation of emotion and use of emotion.This study is conducted to investigate the relationship of emotional intelligence dimensionstowards academic achievement among TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) Teacher Trainees. Each of the 500 participants completed Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), a self-report scale based on four- dimensional definition of emotional intelligence. Data were analysed through descriptive statistics using SPSS and multivariate analysis using Structural Equation Model (SEM) via Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) software. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between two emotional intelligence dimensions, namely use of emotion and regulation of emotion, towards academic achievement. Findings imply that the development of emotional skills should be strengthen and enhanced in planning the curriculum for teacher trainees. This is important so that the future generations of teachers will be well balanced in term of cognitive and emotional domains.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, academic achievement, teacher trainees, Teaching English as Second Language

Introduction

It has been a long concern to many educators to realize that IQ alone is not a reliable predictor of students academic achievement (Craggs, 2005). Results from various studies over a long period of time reveal many other factors that contribute to academic achievement. Other factors such as communication skills, teacher education, teachers' guidance and learning styles, contribute mostly towards academic success(Mushtaq et al., 2012) while Kamariah, Rohani et al (2011) identify behaviour, motivation, learning styles and social support as the factors that determine students' academic achievement. Besides that motivation, students' age and learning preferences are also factors that significantly affect students's academic achievement(Mlambo, 2012). Despite a heated

debate about the determinants of academic performance among educators, stakeholders and policy makers, it is almost inevitable to put aside affective factor which carries the same weight as cognitive factor,in the process of learning. At present the term emotional intelligence has earn its spotlight in the education field due to its great importance. Emotional Intelligence which draws on affective education movement, with has such a rich history, has been poorly understood and badly applied(Brearly, 2001).

Emotional intelligence is regarded as a set of behaviours, viewed as humans' ability to process emotions and deal effectively with them. It is about understanding how people behave with the presence of emotions and emotionally charged thoughts. It is a master of aptitude. a capacity that profoundly affect other abilities,either facilitating or intefering with them(Goleman D., 1996). Emotional Intelligence is demonstrated with our interactions with others and our understanding of ourselves, as Mayer et. al (2001) explained that it defines how and what we learn, allows us to set priorities and determines the majority of our daily actions. Besides that it is also regarded as part of social intelligence.Emotional Intelligence is defined in various ways. For the purpose of this study, the definition by Wong et.al (2007), is referred, where emotional intelligence is recognised as a set of abilities under four dimensions namely self-emotion appraisal, other emotion appraisal, regulation of emotion and use of emotion.

A lot of effort is made to increase academic achievement among trainees as well, understanding and knowing how they learn best would be helpful to enhance the teaching and learning process.Good teachers need a strong emotional intelligence and they should be able to be mindful of students' emotion thus it is pertinent for trainees to be developing intellectual abilities together with emotional competencies to cope adequately with the fast changing society.Study also proves that there is adifference of teacher's level of emotional intelligence with respect to their teaching experience (Mahmoudi, 2011). This mean that novice teachers need to enhance their level of emotional intelligence to prepre them emotionally before embarking into the carrer.The concept of how emotions affecting how we learn are hardly new and the essence of emotional intelligence is that it cannot be taught, but it can be learnt(Brearly, 2001).

Literature Review

Researchers and authors (Dann,2012; Brearly ,2007; Mayer 1990) agreed that emotional intelligence provides learning opportunity for learners to achieve their fullest potential and able to access appropriate emotions when they need them. Most definitions of emotional intelligence consists of two-types of competencies namely, personal and social competency. Both Competencies are represented by five domains: self-awareness, self-confidence, self-regulation, self-motivation and social skills. There are also existence of two extra domains that contribute towards emotional intelligence, which are spirituality and maturity.

A study on 100 teachers of one private educational institution in Oman identifies that age, level of education and working experience affect level of emotional intelligence (Hans et al, 2013). The age group of 31-35 has the higest level of emotional intelligence compared to the other age group. The same result is recorded for teachers with the PhD qualification and those having working experience of over 10 years. The study also concluded that these teachers have high level of awareness about the feelings

and emotions of the sudents and themselves. This is supported by a study on Iranian English for Foreign (EFL) teachers which reveals a significant difference in terms of level of emotional intelligence and their teaching experience. The result showed that the more experienced teachers have higher level of emotional intelligence (Mahmoudi, 2011).

Another study is out carried out on pre-service teachers in University Technologi Mara, Malaysia,that identifies two domains of emotional intelligence namely self-emotion appraisal and understanding of emotion, to be significantly and positively associated with students' academic achievement. One significant study on teachers also proven that they are lack of three core-competencies under social domain (one of the emotional intelligent domain), namely influence, conflict and management. This shows that teachers who lack social skill will not be able to support healthy physical, mental and emotional development among their students. That is why it is important to intergrate emotional intelligence in training curriculum in teachers' training program, preferably as a standalone course, so they can develop emotional intelligence and apply the skill effectively (Noriah et al, 2010).

This study is primarily conducted to analyse the relationship of emotional intelligence dimensions (self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, regulation of emotion and use of emotion)towards academic achievement of the teacher trainees undergoing the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) programme.

Research Objectives and Hypotheses

Research Objectives
The objective of this study is:
1. to find out the level of emotional intelligence among the TESL teacher trainees in IPG
2. To investigate the relationship of Emotional Intelligence dimensions towards Academic Achievement.

Hypotheses of the Study
The following are the hypotheses of the study.
Ha1 There is a significant relationship between Self-Emotion and Academic Achievement
Ha2 There is a significant relationship betweenOthers' Emotion and Academic Achievement
Ha3 There is a significant relationship betweenUse of Emotion and Academic Achievement
Ha4 There is a significant relationship between Regulation and Emotion to Academic Achievement

Methodology
Research Design
The quantitative design methodology used in this study is correlational research. Aims to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic

achievement. The independent variable used in this study is level of emotional intelligence (self-emotion appraisal, other emotion appraisal, and regulation of emotion and use of emotion) and the dependent variable is trainees' academic achievement in a form of Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA).

Population and sampling
The population selected are the TESL teacher trainees from Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG) or Malaysia Institute of Teacher Education. Cluster sampling is employed to select five out of the 27 IPGs in Malaysia, as every selected IPG representing each zone. IPG Kampus Perlis from the north zone, IPG Kampus Ipoh from the middle zone, IPG Kampus Kota Baru from the east coast zone, IPG Kampus Bahasa Antarabangsa from the west coast zone, IPG Kampus Tun Hussain Onn from the south zone and IPG Kampus Batu Lintang from the east Malaysia. Next, using stratified sampling, semester seven TESL teacher trainees from the TESL programme in respective IPGs are selected as samples. Finally 411out of 750 trainees were randomly chosen to become the samples.

Instrumentation
Questionnaire is used to collect data for this study, consist of 2 sections. Section A is on demographic background and Section B is on dimensions of emotional intelligence. Wong and Law (2002) Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) was used to identify the level of emotional intelligence among the trainees. It consist of four dimensions which are self-emotion appraisal (SE), other emotion appraisal(OE), regulation of emotion (RE) and use of emotion (UE). All the 16 items are constructed using ten-point interval scale ranging from 1-Strongly Disagree to 10-Strongly Agree.

Data Analysis Procedures
Data gathered is analysed using of IBM SPSS Statistics 19 and Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) version 20 software. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the research respondents' profile. Result is presented in a fom of frequency and percentages in tables. The inferential statistics meanwhile are used for, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation model (SEM). The discussion is carried out in based from the findings of the research.

5.0 Data Analysis and Findings
Table 5.1 : Demographic Information

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	177	43.1
Female	234	56.9
Total	411	100.0
Race		

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	177	43.1
Female	234	56.9
Malay	236	57.4
Chinese	56	13.6
Indian	21	5.1
Others	98	23.8
CGPA		
2.50 - 2.99	21	5.1
3.00 - 3.49	230	56.0
3.50 - 4.00	160	38.9
IPG		
IPG Perlis	100	20.0
IPG Kota Baru	99	19.8
IPG Tun Hussein Onn	93	18.6
IPG B.Antarabangsa	128	25.6
IPG Batu Lintang	80	16.0

In Table 5.1 above, there are four main important variables in demographic profiles such as gender, Etnicity, CGPA and IPG(campuses). Mean estimation does not applied to categorical variable of gender, IPG, and Ethnicity. CGPA has mean of 3.41 and standard deviation of .256 and minimum value of 2.74, and maximum of 4.0. In order to describe the level of emotional intelligence in this study, a mean score of 0.00 to 2.99 are considered low, 3.00 to 6.99 are considered moderate and 7.00 to 10.00 are considered high.

Table 5.2 : Descriptive Analysis of Level of Emotional Intelligence

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional Intelligence	7.94	1.14

Table 5.3 Descriptive Analysis of Domains of Emotional Intelligence

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self –Emotion Appraisal	8.07	1.33
Others'Emotion Appraisal	7.99	1.40
Use of Emotion	8.04	1.34
Regulation of Emotion	7.73	1.49

Table 5.2 reveals that TESL teacher trainees in IPGs have high level of emotional intelligence (M=7.94, SD=1.14).In Table 5.3, the trainees also are reported to have high level of emotional intelligence for all the four dimensions investigated in this study with Self –Emotion Appraisal (M=8.07, SD=1.33), Others' Emotion Appraisal (M=7.99, SD=1.40), Use of Emotion (M=8.04, SD=1.34) and Regulation of Emotion (M=7.73, SD=1.49).

The finding indicates that the trainees are highly aware of their own emotions and believe that they can function well depending on situation the are in. Besides that they believe that they are able to use their emotion to relate to information received, also able to notice the signal received and influence their thinking. The lowest mean score of the four dimensions is the ability to regulate the emotion. This would mean a person is able to withstand pleasant and unpleasant feelings and able to cope with preassure well. This is considered as the most advance of the four abilities that make an emotional intelligence individual (Mayer et al, 2001).

In testing the hypotheses, Structural Equation Model (SEM) was used. SEM is a confirmatory method, able to provide a comprehensive means for validating the measurement model of latent construct via Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Zainudin A., 2015). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is able to assess unidimentionality, validity and realibilityof the latent contruct. Researcher would perform CFA before modeling the structurel model.

The overall measurement modelconsisted of all sub-constructs involved in this study. There are four sub-constructs namely 'SE', 'RE', 'OE', and 'UE' for self-emotion appraisal (SE), other emotion appraisal(OE), regulation of emotion (RE) and use of emotion (UE). This model included a total of 16 items initially before achieving goodness of fit acquired. Further analysis continued with CFA steps by steps accordingly. If low factor loading items have been deleted but the fitness indexes are still below the required level, there must be some redundancy among items in the model. The study could determine the redundant items in the measurement model through the Modification Indices (MI). In this model, items are deleted one at a time and each time an item was deleted, the researcher would run the model untilgoodness of fit was achieved.A model is regarded as acceptable if the RMSEA is less than .08, Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) exceeds 0.9, The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) exceeds .90 , The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) exceeds .90 and Chi-SquareDegree of Freedom (Chisq/df) less than 5.0 (Zainudin, 2015)
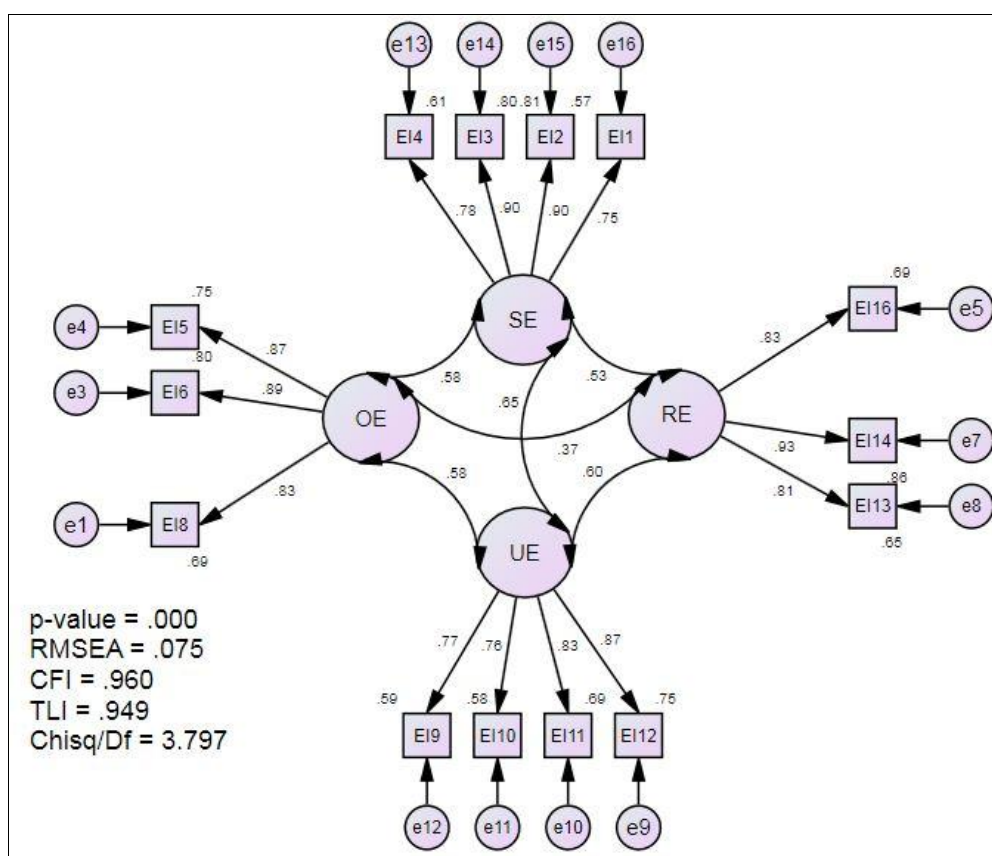
Figure5.1: Measurement Model of Emotional Intelligence for CFA

According to Figure 5.1, all indexes had finally achieved the required level of fitness with Chisq/Df of 3.797 value, RMSEA of .075 value, CFI with value of .960, and TLI of .949 value. Overall final measurement model consisted of 4 items for sub-construct 'SE' which were EI1, EI2, EI3, and EI4, and also 4 items for sub-construct 'UE' namely EI9, EI10, EI11, and EI12. Another sub-construct of 'OE' had 3 items left, EI5, EI5, and EI8. There were 3 items located in sub-construct 'RE' which were EI16, EI14, and EI13. Total items left in this final model of Emotional Intelligent was counted to 14. Not to mention, correlations between SE and OE, SE and RE, and SE and UE valued .58, .53, and .65 respectively. There were no multi-collinearity problem among constructs since correlation of between constructs do not surpass value of .85.

In the next step, normality assessment is made by assessing the measure of skewness for every item. The absolute value of skew-ness should be lower than 1.5 to indicate the data is normally distributed (Zainudin, 2015). The absolute value of skew-ness for all items are smaller than 1.5. Thus all items in the measurement model are normally distributed. Once the measurement model has achieved the required validity and reliability levels together with the normality distribution of the data, the next step is to model these constructs into structural model and proceeding with structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis.

In determining the strength of the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement, researcher modelall the constructs in structural model for

analysis using SEM. Refering to Figure 5.2, The probability of getting a critical ratio as large as 3.078 in absolute value is .002. In other words, the regression weight for RE in the prediction of Achievement is significantly different from zero at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). Hence, when RE increase by 1 unit, Achievement decrease by .063 unit. The probability of getting a critical ratio as large as 4.055 in absolute value is less than 0.001. In other words, the regression weight for UE in the prediction of Achievement is significantly different from zero at the 0.001 level (two-tailed). Hence, when UE increase by 1 unit, Achievement increase by .122 unit. The probability of getting a critical ratio as large as 0.453 in absolute value is .650. In other words, the regression weight for SE in the prediction of Achievement is not significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level (two-tailed). The probability of getting a critical ratio as large as 0.569 in absolute value is .569. In other words, the regression weight for OE in the prediction of Achievement is not significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).
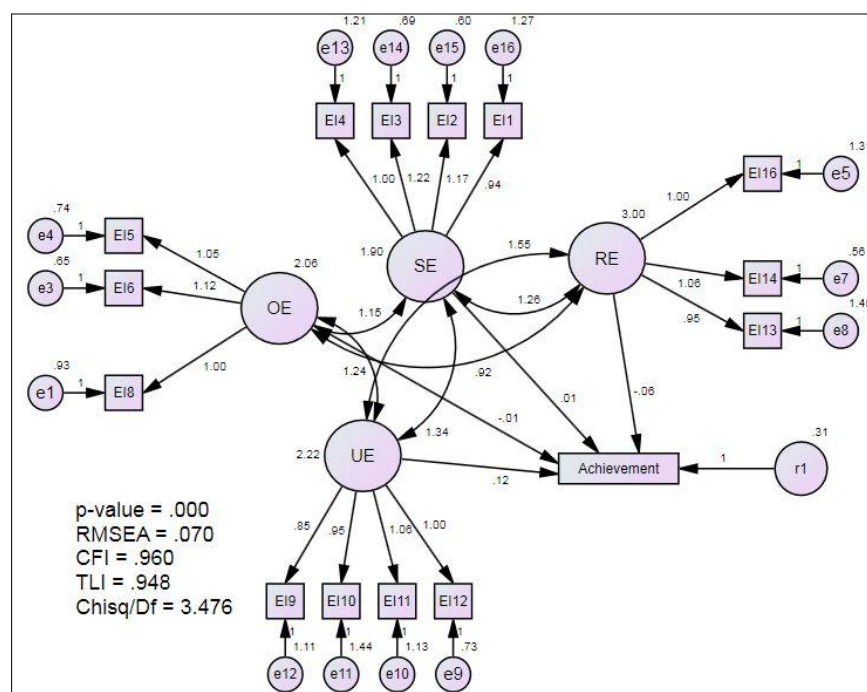

Figure5.2: Relationship of Emotional Intelligence dimensions towards Academic Achievement

It is estimated that the predictors for dependent construct Academic Achievement explained the 31% of the total variances as shown in Figure 5.2. This indicated 31% of the Academic Achievement can be estimated by self-emotion appraisal, other emotion appraisal, regulation of emotion and use of emotion constructs. In other hand, error variance for Academic Achievement estimated to be 69% of the Academic Achievement's variance itself.

Table 5.4: Regression Path Coefficient between Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Comment
Achievement <---	SE	.013	.029	.453	.650	Not Significant
Achievement <---	OE	-.014	.025	-.569	.569	Not Significant
Achievement <---	UE	.122	.030	4.055	***	**Significant**
Achievement <---	RE	-.063	.021	-3.078	.002	**Significant**

Table 5.4 , discusses the results of the study based on the hypotheses tested.

Ha1 There is a significant relationship between Self-Emotion and Academic Achievement
The resultdoes not support hypothesis 1as Self-Emotion dimension does not have a significant relationship to academic achievement(p value .650)

Ha2 There is a significant relationship between Others' Emotion and Academic Achievement
The result of the study failed to support hypothesis 2 , where understanding of Others' Emotionshas no significant relationship with academic achievement (p value .569)

Ha3 There is a significant relationship of Use between Emotion and Academic Achievement
The result of the study supports hypothesis 3 which is use of emotions that relates positively toacademic achievement (β=.122). This means when use of emotion among the TESL trainees increase, their academic achievement also will increase.The result is consistent with Maizatul et al, (2013)studyon students in EducationFaculty, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) which also reveals a significant positive relationship between use of emotion and academic achievement.

Ha$_4$ There is a significant relationship between Regulation of Emotion and Academic Achievement
The result support hypothesis 4 as it revealed a significant negative relationship (β=-.063) between regulation of emotions and academic achievement. This result is means that if the regulation of emotion level decrease, academic achievement will increase.Therefore, trainees who can regulate their emotions well will not perform well in their academic. This
Discussion and Conclusion
Based on the findings, a few conclusions can be drawn. Firstly,the finding shows that TESL teacher trainees from Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG) or Malaysia Institute of Teacher Educationhave high level of emotional intelligence. This is a good indication that these trainees are able to be aware, understand and manage emotions in order to adapt to life's demands and preasures.The result is similar to the study by Pishghadam

(2009) and Maizatul et al. (2013) who identify emotional intelligence to beassociated with academic performance.

When it is examined according to dimensions, the findings yield significant relationship with academic achievement. In testing the hypotheses, there is no significant relationship was found between two dimensions of emotional intelligence (SE and OE) and academic achievement. Only two dimensions (UE and RE) are found to have significant relationship with academic achievement. RE however has a negative association with academic achievement. This means the ability to identify one's own feeling and understanding others' emotion do not help the TESL trainee teachers in their academic achievement. On the other hand, the abilityto use their emotion to facilitate and motivate them in life, seems to contribute to academic achievement. Since RE has a negative association to academic achievement, it could be concluded thatthe higher the ability to respond to a range of emotions,the lower their performance in academic.Since the respondents are future teacherswith high level of emotional intelligence, it is expected of them to be able to take on the challenge to educate the young learners. Relationship between EI and academic achievement most of the time reveals inconsistent, complex and many different outcomes from past researches. This may be due to studies done in different population, place and culture. In teachers' training program in Malaysia, EI should be further emphasized in order to help the teacher trainees learn how to develop EI and apply the skills associated to it effectively. The development of emotional skills should be strengthen and enhanced in planning the curriculum. This is important so that the future generations of teachers will be well balanced in term of cognitive and emotional domains.

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