

The Level of Trait Emotional Intelligence among Politeknik METrO Johor Bahru Staff

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Abstract

Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form (TEIQue-SF) has been used widely in the Western context. The purpose of this study is to identify the level of trait emotional intelligence among Politeknik METrO Johor Bahru (PMJB) staff. This study includes 42 staff from both academic and administrative departments in PMJB with a response rate of 93%. The data collected is analysed using Statistical Packages for Social Science version 18 (SPSS v.18) to produce the mean score for each dimension in Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaires – Short Form. This questionnaire includes 30 items that were used to predict four dimensions in trait emotional intelligence which are emotionality, sociability, self-control, and well-being. The results revealed that PMJB staff possessed high level of trait emotional intelligence especially in terms of well-being. Hence, the findings on this study will contribute to literature regarding the trait emotional intelligence in Malaysian context and more research on this topic should be studied in the future.

Keywords: trait emotional intelligence, staff, polytechnic, Politeknik METrO Johor Bahru

Introduction

The study on emotional intelligence (EI) has been done numerously in the past 25 years. Some of the famous literature regarding emotional intelligence includes Salovey and Mayer (1990), Goleman (1995) and Bar-On (1997). Ever since the foundation of these theorists on emotional intelligence had been developed, many other researches that relate EI and several other dimensions have been studied. For example, the study on EI and academic performance (Petrides, Frederickson, & Furnham, 2004; Shipley, Jackson, & Segrest, 2010), EI and personality traits (Andi, 2012), EI and stress (Arora et al., 2011; Boshoff, 2011; Mikolajczak, Luminet, & Menil, 2006) and EI and health outcome (Martins, Ramalho, & Morin, 2010; Smith et al., 2012).

TEIQue-SF is a 30-items inventory derived from the long form of TEIQue that has been developed by Petrides (2009a) to measure the trait emotional intelligence. The long form of TEIQue that consist of 153 items has an excellent psychometric properties (Cooper & Petrides, 2010). In fact, TEIQue if compared with other trait emotional intelligence inventory provides complete analysis of the 15 facets of the trait EI sampling

domain. In contrast, other measures typically overlook a large part of this domain and often include irrelevant facets (Cooper & Petrides, 2010). Hence, a lot of studies had been using TEIQue as their research instrument such as determining leadership role (Petrides, 2008-Brochure), gender differences in EI (Petrides & Furnham, 2006), academic performance and deviant behaviour (Petrides, Frederickson, et al., 2004), work-family conflict, psychological distress, and life satisfaction (Karim & Weisz, 2011), surgeon assessment (Lin, Kannappan, & Lau, 2013) and even in predicting cancer pathway (Smith et al., 2012).

However, there is not much literature of the short form of TEIQue especially in the Asian context. Only one study found that validate TEIQue-SF in Asia (Abe et al., 2013). Even though TEIQue is proven to have high reliability in term of internal consistency (Mikolajczak, Luminet, Leroy, & Roy, 2007), in Western context, the lack of literature in Asian context leads the researcher to conduct a study to determine the level of trait emotional intelligence in PMJB. Therefore, researcher has selected all the staff in PMJB as population of this study.

To this extend, the emotional intelligence of a person is crucial to identify their emotional health and others (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). A lot of career emphasized the importance of emotional intelligence as one of the workers traits for example surgeon (Lin et al., 2013), students (Sanchez-Ruiz, Pérez, & Petrides, 2010), and even teachers (Boshoff, 2011). Thus, the second problem statement of this study is to determine the level of trait emotional intelligence among PMJB staff. It is because, workers who were able to manage their emotion were less likely to experience burnout when facing stress (Duran, Extremera, Rey, Fernandez-Berrocal, & Montalban, 2006). In addition, predicting academic achievement among students (Petrides & Frederickson, 2011) too has showed how TEIQue plays a great role among academicians. Trait emotional intelligence is important in determining a person emotional impact on his or her personality aspect (Mavroveli, Petrides, Rieffe, & Bakker, 2007). Hence, it is important to know the level of trait EI among PMJB staff. The trait emotional intelligence has four factors which include emotionality, self-control, sociability, and well-being.

Literature review and hypothesis development

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been widely studied ever since it's come back in psychological literature back in 1990s. Long before that, emotional intelligence started its base in literature by Thorndike (1920). He suggested that human possessed a few types of intelligence where one of which was called the social intelligence. Thorndike defined social intelligence as the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls, and to act accordingly in relationship with others (as cited in Salovey & Mayer, 1990). About 65 years later, Howard Gardner (1985) in his book *Frames of Mind: The theory of Multiple Intelligences* explained

the interpersonal intelligence and intrapersonal intelligence. Both of the definitions of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence were closely related to the definition of EI that we use nowadays. Gardner describes interpersonal intelligence as the ability to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of others whilst intrapersonal intelligence as the ability to understand oneself, appreciates own feelings, fears and motivations (Gardner, 1985). To sum up, early theorists like Thorndike and Gardner laid the basic conceptual definitions of emotional intelligence even though it is still ambiguous at that specific era.

The new beginnings of EI started in 1990 when Mayer and Salovey published two articles that introduced the term emotional intelligence (Mayer, DiPaolo, & Salovey, 1990; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). In the first article entitled *Emotional Intelligence*, Salovey and Mayer (1990) stated that EI is capacity to identify and differentiates emotions and feelings of self and others and to use that input to monitor one's thought and behaviour. On the other hand, the second article focused on extracting the EI score like consensual accuracy, amount and range of emotion perceived thus comparing it with other constructs like alexithymia and neuroticism (Mayer et al., 1990). Alexithymia refers to difficulty in identifying feelings and emotions of self and others, limited imagination, and outward cognitive style orientation (Luminet, Vermeulen, Demaret, Taylor, & Bagby, 2006).

Goleman (1995) defined emotional intelligence as capability to understand emotions and emotional self-worth of own self as well as the others in motivating and managing personal emotions in order to maintain a good rapport with other people (Goleman, 1995). In spite of Goleman did not operationally defined his concept of EI, he claimed that those who are good emotionally would be successful at home, at school and at the workplace (Goleman, 1995). In addition, Goleman (1998) further explained the importance of emotional intelligence at work in his book *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. The books have raised the attention regarding research on emotional intelligence due to its wide coverage on this topic (Petrides & Furnham, 2000a). As a result, ever since its publication, more studies have been conducted to expand the understanding about emotional intelligence.

Bar-On (1997) proposed another definition of emotional intelligence where he defined emotional intelligence as the awareness in understanding oneself and others, connecting with other people, and dealing effectively with environmental pressures and demands by adjusting and coping with immediate surroundings. Later on Bar-On and Parker (2000) claimed that EI should be classified distinctly from other general intelligence (IQ) due to its emphasis in interpersonal, social competencies, and emotional ability instead of the cognitive dimensions of intelligence. The first psychometric measurement of EI was also developed by Bar-On called the *Emotional Quotient Inventory* (EQ-i) (Bar-On, 1997). Yusoff et al. (2011) proposed that emotional intelligence

refers to the ability to perceive, express, understand, motivate, control and regulate emotion. Emotionally intelligent people are self-aware, able to control their emotions well.

From overwhelming, stress, depression, anxiety, or anger and delay their enjoyment in pursuit of long-term rewards, rather than being overhauled by immediate desires (Yusoff et al., 2011). As a result, Shergill (2010) stated that this condition enables them to read others' emotions, handle others' emotion skillfully knowing what to say to a grieving friend, how to encourage colleagues, and how to manage conflicts well. To sum up, emotional intelligence refers to one's awareness about their emotions as well as the others and their ability to justify the reason of being in that certain state of emotion.

1.1 Trait Emotional Intelligence

Some of the trait theorists claimed that personality is influenced by biological and environmental factors where people's behaviour is expressed by following the local culture (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985). Over the years, personality traits is studied longitudinally and can be said as stable in psychological literature (Caspi & Roberts, 1999). The two types of emotional intelligence which is ability EI and trait EI has been researched by Petrides and Furnham (2000b, 2001, 2003). According to Petrides and Furnham (2001), trait emotional intelligence refers to a constellation of emotional self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies. Petrides, Pita, and Kokkinaki (2007) stated that trait EI is hypothesized as a lower order trait due to its narrower order of personality dimension. This lower order status is proven by correlating trait EI with basic personality dimensions (Tett, Fox, & Wang, 2005).

As mentioned earlier, in the study of emotional intelligence, there are two distinct definitions of emotional intelligence which are trait emotional intelligence and ability emotional intelligence. These two differences had been mentioned in numerous studies like Ferguson & Austin, (2010); Mavroveli et al., (2007); Pérez, Petrides, & Furnham, (2005); Petrides, (2011); Petrides, Furnham, & Frederickson, (2004). Trait emotional intelligence or trait emotional self-efficacy emphasized in emotion-related disposition and self-perceptions that are measured by self-report inventory like Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire, TEIQue (Petrides, Furnham, & Mavroveli, 2007). In contrast, ability emotional intelligence or cognitive emotional ability highlights the emotion-related mental abilities that is measured by using maximum-performance assessments like Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test or MSCEIT (Petrides, Furnham, et al., 2007).

2.1.1 Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaires (TEIQue)

TEIQue was developed by Petrides and Furnham (2003). It is a scientific measurement instrument based exclusively on trait emotional intelligence theory which is developed in the context of the trait emotional

intelligence research programme (Petrides & Furnham, 2006). The TEIQue is a psychometrically validated measure of trait emotional intelligence which is supported by a world class research programme based in University College London (Kosnin & Huey, 2012). It is available in multiple languages and the data base is United Kingdom normed (Petrides, 2008). It provides several conceptual advantages over early trait emotional intelligence measures and it is available free of charge for academic research purposes (Petrides, Frederickson, et al., 2004). The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) is a 153-item questionnaire measuring one's trait emotional intelligence which is established by Petrides (2009b). It measures 15 facet variables, which is also known as subscales by using a seven-point rating scale from 1=Completely Disagree to 7=Completely Agree. It needs approximately 20 minutes to be completed (Petrides, 2013). These subscales are grouped into four factors of trait emotional intelligence which are well-being, social support, self-control and emotionality (Veselka et al., 2009). Petrides (2006) mentioned about the internal consistency of the short form of TEIQue (TEIQue-SF). It contains 30 items, provided that scores on the four factors and global trait emotional intelligence (Petrides, 2006) and consumes approximately 5 to 7 minutes to complete. Under a research program that is directed by Petrides in University College London, London Psychometric Laboratory is developed specifically to do research about trait emotional intelligence (Petrides, 1998). According to this website, TEIQue has been translated into several languages like French (Mikolajczak et al., 2007) and Germany (Freudenthaler, Neubauer, Gabler, Scherl, & Rindermann, 2008) and Greek (Petrides, Pita, et al., 2007). In addition, TEIQue-SF that was developed by Petrides et al. (2010) contains 15 subscales that were derived from the long form of TEIQue (Petrides, 2009b- Technical Manual). Two items from each of the 15 subscales of the TEIQue were selected to be included in the TEIQue-SF, based primarily on their correlations with the corresponding total subscale scores (Zampetakis, 2011).

Hypothesis

To identify the level of trait emotional intelligence among Politeknik METRO Johor Bahru staff.

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the plans and processes for research that covers the decisions from wide-ranging analysis (Creswell, 2013). This study is a descriptive study and it is used because it is suitable to identify the level of trait emotional intelligence among PMJB staff. Besides, it is used to describe the demographic background of respondents. This study is also a cross-sectional study where researcher collects the data at a certain period of time. In this case, respondents were all the staff in PMJB in May

2015.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The population of this research is all the staff in Politeknik METrO Johor Bahru. Based on data received by PMJB Directory, the population of all the staff in PMJB is 45 people. According to sampling size table by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the number of sample size that is suitable for this population is 40 respondents. However, we managed to obtain 42 respondents for this study with response rate of 93%.

3.3 Data Collection

The questionnaire is distributed to all 45 staff in PMJB. The questionnaire is distributed to the subject during their free time at their respective work station. This is to ensure that they are not burdened nor obligated to fill in the questionnaire given if they are forced to do it. In fact, researcher did not force the respondent to answer the questionnaire. Each subject is given ample time of approximately 7 to 8 minutes to answer the questionnaire. Meanwhile, researcher is just nearby to explain to them in case the respondents did not comprehend with any terms or questions in TEIQue-SF. The questionnaires were collected from the respondents after they have completed answering the questions.

3.4 Descriptive Statistic

The descriptive statistic of this study was analysed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS v.18). In response to the objective in study that focus in determining the level of trait emotional intelligence among PMJB staff, the descriptive statistic such as frequency, percentages and mean are used. It is also used to analyze the demographic details of the respondents. The mean score, percentages and frequency were calculated for question number 1 to 10 in Part A. Besides, the level of trait emotional intelligence among PMJB staff was produced by using SPSS by calculating the mean scores. The higher the mean score for each item, the higher the level of trait emotional intelligence of a person. Table 1 provides the level of trait emotional intelligence according to mean score.

Table 1: The Level of Trait Emotional Intelligence Mean Value Indicators

1.00-3.00	Low
3.01-4.99	Moderate
5.00-7.00	High

Source: Petrides and Furnham (2003)

Results and analysis

Table 2 elucidates the level of trait emotional intelligence among PMJB

staff in accordance with TEIQue-SF dimensions. As we can see, the factors ‘well-being’ and ‘sociability’ can be considered as high with mean score of 5.70 and 5.36 with standard deviation of .628 and .850 respectively. Emotionality, self-control and sociability score moderately with means of 4.78, 4.63, and 4.52 respectively. Even so, these moderate scores almost approach 5.00 which can be classified as high. This indicates that, PMJB staff scores relatively higher level of trait emotional intelligence according to their dimensions. In fact, the total mean scores of 5.00 indicate high level on trait emotional intelligence. Hence, it can be concluded that the level of trait emotional intelligence among Politeknik METrO Johor Bahru is high.

Table 2: Level of Trait Emotional Intelligence among PMJB Staff

Dimension	Mean	SD	Level of Trait Emotional Intelligence
1. Emotionality	4.78	.659	Moderate
2. Self-Control	4.63	.814	Moderate
3. Well-Being	5.70	.628	High
4. Sociability	4.52	.659	Moderate
5. Global Trait EI	5.36	.850	High
Total Score	5.00	.596	High

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 Level of Trait Emotional Intelligence among PMJB Staff

The main objective of this study is to identify the level of trait emotional intelligence PMJB staff using TEIQue-SF. In this study, the dimension well-being and global trait EI scores the highest level of mean with 5.70 (SD=.628) and 5.36 (SD=.850) respectively. Hence, the results for high level of well-being portrayed that most of the staff perceived positivism, happiness and are contended with their life (Petrides, 2001). This is supported by research on culture and well-being by Diener and Choi (2009) which claimed that education based worker are mostly happy. In fact, having a stable income monthly can contribute to their highest score in well-being.

Even though other dimensions of TEIQue-SF indicate moderate level of trait emotional intelligence of (4.78 SD=.659), (4.63, SD=.814) and (4.52, SD.659) for emotionality, self-control and the sociability scores respectively, it is actually quite a higher level of moderate. This shows that generally, PMJB staff have a moderately high level of trait emotional intelligence. It is crucial for a person to have ability to control their emotions and desire - self-control, and to have the ability to make friends and tolerate a relationship with other people -emotionality (Turner, Husman, &

Schallert, 2002). In fact, staff in PMJB will deal with a lot of people like other lecturers, students, parents, supplier and society members (Hershey Dirkin, Mishra, & Altermatt, 2005). Hence, high level of emotional stability is one of the important skills a person need to have. Back to the literature review of this paper, researcher had concluded based on the literature review that definitions of emotional intelligence as one's awareness about their emotions as well as the others and their ability to justify the reason of being in that certain state of emotion.

4.2 Recommendations

Several recommendations for future research are discussed in this section. The terms traits emotional intelligence is still new to the emotional intelligence literature. It was established approximately 14 years back by Petrides and Furnham (2000b). However, there is a lot of study on trait emotional intelligence in Western context to validate the psychometric properties of TEIQue. In fact, TEIQue had been widely used in Western context. Nonetheless, there is not much literature on TEIQue-SF in the Asian region. Hence, it is hard to predict the validity of this instrument. Researcher would like to encourage future study to investigate more on TEIQue and its relationship with other variables like organizational outcome, entrepreneurship behaviour, employability, stress, and health outcomes. This is because these studies had been done in Western context and apparently showing result that trait emotional intelligence are able to predict those variables.

The context of this study, which is the PMJB staff, possessed high level of trait emotional intelligence. Therefore, it is crucial for them, in fact, all workers to sustain and increase the level of mentioned intelligence. This is because workers who generally deal with many people like colleagues, parents, suppliers and lecturers must be able to control their emotions (self-control), interact with them (sociability), perceived this life positively (well-being) and develop the sense of empathy towards self and other people (emotionality). These dimensions proposed by Petrides and Furnham (2001) are important skills workers need to master in order to communicate and mingle with others.

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