

Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance: A Study among Malaysian Administrators

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the association between emotional intelligence and job performance amongst academic administrators in Malaysia. The data was collected by using questionnaires and descriptive statistic was employed to investigate the strength of the linear relationship between emotional intelligence and performance. Results obtained from surveying a sample of 196 academic administrators showed that emotional intelligence positively correlated with job performance. It is argued that the higher level of emotional intelligence predicts the learning establishments. The results indicate that to boost emotional intelligence among academic administrators, several contributing social factors are affected, such as developing a new cohort of highly-competent emotionally skilled administrators who can manage changeable situations at higher intelligence in the higher education. The article implies that predisposition of emotional intelligent support educational administrators regarding their selection and recruitment across higher learning institutions.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Job Performance, Academic Administrators, Higher Learning Institutions.

Introduction

The institutions of higher learning have been looking for an educational environment with highly effective academic administrators. Similarly, institutions of higher education emphasize to promote the level of academic administrators' job performance. The performance of individuals is subjected to various variables such as culture and value, total quality management, leadership, competencies, communication, education, learning, strategy, race, and ability. In human resource development perspective, all these variables might contribute to the enhancement of job performance. Emotional intelligence is considered to determine the success of organizational and individual life. However, there is still a gap regarding insufficient understanding towards the importance of studying emotional intelligence and its effectiveness on improving performance among academic administrators. It plays a major role to evolve the strategic competence in organizations. Some previous studies found evidence to associate job performance to emotional intelligence; this study aims to contribute to existing literature to add more clarity regarding the relationship between job performance and emotional intelligence (Cote & Miners, 2006). The results of past research studies revealed that 20% to 30% proportion of workplace success is attributed to emotional intelligence and academic administrators. Since they have a higher level of emotional intelligence perform more proficiently (Shamsuddin & Rahman, 2014; Greenidge, Devonish, & Alleyne, 2014); they feel satisfied with their job and feel devoted to their organization and their career (Al Ali, Garner, & Magadley, 2012).

According to Cartwright & Pappas, (2008), academic administrators with a high level of emotional intelligence had a better functionality in their institutions. In other words, an individual with high level of emotional intelligence has superior performance, due to the predisposition of EI competencies. Substantially, academic administrators who acknowledge their beliefs and emotions are capable of executing their jobs more efficiently. Shamsuddin & Rahman, (2014) reported that there was a positive relationship between performance and emotional intelligence. Thus, the related previous studies confirmed that the accomplishment of the related job is influenced by emotional intelligence (Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005; O'Boyle, et al., 2011a). Furthermore, emotional intelligence is significantly linked to the work environment, attitude and job performance. Therefore, they reported that emotional intelligence is one of the significant predictors of job performance among academic administrators in educational contexts.

Literature Review

Job Performance

Due to the importance of job performance in all administrations, the operational definition of "performance" should be defined exactly (Armstrong, 2014). The precise meaning of performance takes the concepts of 'the execution of a job,' 'attainment,' and 'accomplishment.'

The concept of performance is based on a series of objectives that set and institution's mission and its scheme for future (Sonnentag, Volmer, & Sychala, 2008).

Performance is described as the element that the organization assigns an employee to do, and perform job completely. Besides, performance is defined as achievement of organizational goals, fulfilment of organizational expectations, attainment of standards or accomplishment of the organizational ability. Nevertheless, the method of achieving the goals is more important than the concept of the achievement itself (Armstrong, 2014). Some studies supposed that performance is not only actions but also, it is described by evaluative processes (Mihalcea, 2014). Similarity, performance is not expressed and determined only by actions but also peripheral factors such as social and political elements and human resources (Shamsuddin & Rahman, 2014).

Moreover, the concept of job performance has multidimensional aspects that express the process of performing a task, concentration of efficiency, skills, creativity and practical resources. Therefore, according to Campbell, McHenry, and Wise (1990) two fundamental forms of job performance is recognized. The first component includes certain jobs. Mainly, these components reflect specific job behaviours or technical capabilities that are associated with some careers. The second element is related to all kinds of jobs. Performance is defined as the actions of individuals, which is not included the outcomes of actions, whereas, efficiency considers the consequence of performance, the required behaviour or results lead to predicted outcomes (Sonnentag et al., 2008). Otherwise, there is an association between performance and efficiency and effectiveness. In this line, performance is converted from inputs into outputs to achieve certain behaviour (Sonnentag & Volmer, 2010). Performance is comparatively described by "three E" namely, efficiency, effectiveness and economy to encourage individuals to involve in program or activity. So, performance is associated with effectiveness, and cost "economy". Recognition of performance notion depends on three main facets: establishing goals, adjusting the methods to evaluate accomplishment and considering continuous progress assessment (Motowidlo, 2003).

According to Hogan and Holland (2003), the notion of job performance consists of multidimensional concepts such as adaptive performance, contextual performance, counterproductive behaviour and task performance. Besides, Motowidlo, (2003) employed two aspects of job performance namely, contextual performance and task performance. Task performance is referred to an individual's skill and capability that is formally performed as part of individual's jobs. Task performance involves direct or indirect actions related to key job tasks. Likewise, it precisely contributes to providing services or producing goods, and the technical core of organizations (Ng & Feldman, 2010). Furthermore, task performance is clarified as a behavioural notion to incorporate a mental process to select, prepare, inspire, and assist employees in situational processes (Motowidlo, 2003). Regarding the assessment of task performance in human resource development studies, different criterion measures are employed such as turnover ratings, promo ability ratings, and supervisory ratings. However, according to Badawy, (2007) performance is measured at different levels, task performance differs from interpersonal efficiency quantity and quality of work. Contextual performance

comprises of behaviours such as honesty, truthfulness or assistance of colleagues, and also contextual performance is related to developing of work procedures. Contextual actions include performing some informal job activities voluntarily, helping and supporting and cooperating with others to achieve tasks (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997).

Therefore, contextual performance is associated with the motivation or willingness to do the job (Wang, Oh, Courtright & Colbert, 2011). As a result, contextual performance measurement consists of several universal characteristics that are utilized to assign various positions in an organization. Similarly, many activities like assistance and collaboration or cooperation with colleagues, following organizational techniques and rules are carried out when individuals are in trouble to validate, sustain, and defend organizational goals, to preserve extra enthusiasm while it is necessary to achieve personal tasks efficiently. Both contextual and task performance are considered to enhance the efficiency of job performance (Motowidlo, Borman & Schmit, 1997). As a rule, organizations should take into account the contextual and task performance of employees while evaluating and assessing overall effectiveness and efficiency of their performance. The performance of academic administrators is considered to be a constant process that represents a vital part of human resource management.

Performance of Academic Administrators

Academic administrators' performances play a major role in all higher educational institutions (Hempel, 2001). It is necessary for academic administrators as authorities to have a comprehensive idea regarding their role within the structure of the organization. Therefore, they are capable of (1) making their position more effective and efficient; (2) having the power of decision-making sufficiently to take responsibilities; and (3) referring to their original job position as a member of the committee (Sonnentag & Volmer, 2010).

The findings of previous studies revealed that academic administrators' performance has a substantial positive effect on institutions since academic administrators make a lot of effort to increase the organizational performance (Neely *et al.*, 2000). There are a series of variables like regulatory mandates and environment, leadership competencies, resources, and skills influence directly or indirectly influence the performance of academic administrators. Many scholars found that performance in higher educational institutions, especially at academic sectors; reflects a range of aims include certain organizational goals and more delicate objectives related to universities (Bott, Svyantek, Goodman & Bernal, 2003). However, research, teaching, community services are considered as main institution's mission; academic administrators are supposed to provide an educational environment to conduct the research. In this line, teaching, community services, and publications are fundamental benchmarks for evaluating and judging faculty members' performance (Nowell, Gale, & Handley, 2010).

Therefore, the idea of academic administrators' performance in academic settings especially at higher learning institutions contains the following parts: the number of publications, the quality of teaching, provision of sufficient scholarship. Moreover, creating an academic research culture among faculty members, and providing opportunities for faculty members to perceive the characteristics of the research methods. Academic administrators have the potential to

contribute to existing educational research among faculty members at higher learning institutions.

The Nature and Development of Emotional Intelligence

The concept of emotional intelligence has still recognized as an emerging concept, which is defined in different dimensions with the slight agreement (Zeidner, Roberts & Matthews, 2008). The notion of EI has originated from the field of psychology. The concept of emotional intelligence originally was proposed by Salovey and Mayer (1990). It is defined as “the social intelligence is individuals’ ability to monitor his/her own feeling or others’ feelings, to make a distinction between these feeling to utilize this information to direct her/his thinking and actions” (P. 189). Ciarrochi, Chan, and Bajgar (2001) argued that the notion of emotional intelligence is divided into two broad models: mixed model and ability model.

Mandell and Pherwani (2003) defined emotional intelligence as, a subset of abilities to perceive and reason emotionally driven information conceptually. Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2004) considered the emotional intelligence concept of inability model framework; as individuals’ ability to recognize emotions, create emotions, to contribute thinking, to understand feelings and emotions, and to monitor emotions to promote intellectual and emotional development. Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2004) supposed that emotional intelligence components are applied in the workplace such as team effectiveness, management development, and career development. Whereas, mixed models of emotional intelligence has been merged both competency-based model and non-cognitive model (Bar-on, 2006). According to Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005), mixed models of emotional intelligence probably combined or overlapped with previous models of personality, and primary modes which are based on the self-report assessment. The approach of mixed model is applicable in different disciplines such as leadership development, education, industry, and training (Rozell, Pettijohn, & Parker, 2002). The following models are irrelevant to other traits of Mayer’s emotional intelligence model; explain features such as attributes, traits, and social behaviours; whereas the ability models address individuals’ actual intelligence and mental abilities.

Theories and models of Emotional Intelligence

Researchers have classified emotional intelligence into two dominant models; mixed model or ability model.

Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence: The advocates of ability model defined the emotional intelligence as “an individual potential capability to identify and state emotion precisely, to understand emotional knowledge, to employ emotions to facilitate thought and to regulate emotions”(Mayer, Salovey, et al., 2011). This intelligence is called as cognitive processes include personal and emotional urgency. Moreover, proponents of emotional intelligence have assumed legitimacy in the organizational context and the school as emotions reflect individuals’ relationships. As referred to Cobb and Mayer's (2000) model “emotional intelligence has the potential to predict life’s success or result in acceptable and appropriate behaviour” (p.15) but

compared to emotional intelligence, scientific basis policies regarding organizational aspect are more pragmatically developed.

Mayer and Salovey's model: Two psychologists who originally proposed the ability model were Mayer and Salovey in 1990. Later in 1997 they revised the concept of emotional intelligence to expand and develop the model and emphasized on the cognitive elements of emotional intelligence and hypothesized EI as the main potential for developing intellectual and emotional aspects. They defined emotional intelligence as "the ability of an individual to realize and understand emotions and to generate emotion by supporting and promoting reflective thought or intellectual growth and emotional knowledge" (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2004). The degree of complexity to process thought and emotions improves various dimensions. Furthermore, every dimension is related to its specific phases or levels of abilities that people learn in sequential order. This notion of emotional intelligence is recognized as the limited concept.

Mixed Model

Bar-On's Model: Currently, in the field of psychology, the influence of emotional intelligence on social interaction and well-being has been widely investigated and studied. Bar-On (1997) developed the theoretical framework of the mixed model or competency model. Based on this model, they defined EI as "a set of non-cognitive abilities, competencies, and capabilities that affect individuals' ability to achieve success to cope with demands and pressures." Bar-on (2006) revised a new model and added new dimension to emotional intelligence as Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI). He defined it as "a cross-sectional interrelated emotional and social abilities, skills and competencies that influence how efficiently individuals recognize and convey their emotions, sympathize with others and have relationship with them, and deal with daily demands and pressures (p. 3)".

Schutte's Model: SSEIT (Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test) is used to assess emotional intelligence component. Schutte, Malouff, Thorsteinsson, Bhullar and Rooke (2007), developed the SSEIT. It composes of 33 items to evaluate four components of emotional intelligence according to Salovey and Mayer (1990): (1) to assess individual and others' emotions; (2) to explain emotions; (3) to control and monitor individual and others' emotion; 4) to employ emotion for solving problems. The SSEIT emphasizes on typical or moderate emotional intelligence.

The outcomes of a component analysis (Mayer et al., 2011), revealed that researchers realized that emotional intelligence demonstrates a strong or first factor or one-factor concept. Schutte *et al.* (2007), has added 33 questions to the SSEIT and employed it to assess this factor to achieve to the unique concept of emotional intelligence. Based on the existing literature on emotional intelligence models, two main theories of emotional intelligence have recognized to guide related research on emotional intelligence. The ability model is considered to be theoretically strong and supportive; but the mixed model seems to be more popular and effective to measure the degree of emotional intelligence in the workplace (Cartwright & Pappas, 2008).

Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance

It is assumed that emotional intelligence directly leads to performance. According to Cartwright & Pappas, (2008), it was more likely that human resources with high emotional intelligence identified to express feelings as part of their profession and to act efficiently. A meta-analysis showed that emotional intelligence could better predict performance for occupations in general. Conversely, (Goleman, 2007) believed that emotional intelligence was not a strong and adequate indicator to predict outcome factor but that it was an actual display of one's capacity to acquire the skills required for achieving success. In contrast, some evidence revealed that emotion insights a weak relationship with performance (Rozell *et al.*, 2002).

The relationships between emotional intelligence, process satisfaction, process behaviours, and team performance were examined by (Cote & Miners, 2006) among 81 teams consisting of two partners. The findings revealed that team performance and emotional intelligence were significantly related. Nevertheless, (O'Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver, & Story, 2011b) reported a significant but weak relationship between organization performance and emotional intelligence.

Research Methodology

Participants: The current study emphasizes on academic administrators who provide educational services to higher learning institutions, therefore, the sample size of this study is drawn from higher learning institutions.

The respondents were selected from 3 selected universities in Malaysia as full-time academic administrators who have been working as dean, deputy dean, directors, deputy directors, and head of departments.

Measures

Emotional intelligence: Schutte *et al.* (2007) developed (SSEIT) is employed as an instrument for measurement in this study. Mayer and Salovey initially developed this self-report test based on the ability model (1990). This self-report measure test contains 33-item which report about individuals 'emotion for instance, "I realize the emotions people are experiencing" and "I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them." Schutte *et al.* (2007) report that the scale significantly correlated with components that originated from theories, namely impulse control, attention to feelings, mood repair, transparency of feelings, optimism. The items of the test are internally consistent and analysis of test-retest reliability presented a high degree of reliability. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of this self-report scale was 0.73. The predictive validity and discriminant validity indicated acceptable results (Schutte *et al.*, 2007). Due to adequate characteristics of the SSEIT test scale is adapted to be applied in the present study. The test was designed on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree, to present how each item provides an exact description of emotions. Higher total scores revealed a higher level of emotional intelligence.

Job Performance: The researcher discussed with academic administrators who are working in this position and decided to utilize a self-report survey to measure the level of job performance

among academic administrators. This survey includes two following components or dimensions: task performance and contextual performance. To assess job performance, 22 items developed by (Motowildo & Borman, 2009) were used as well. In the present study, each item assessed job performance through a five-point scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree.

Statistical Analysis

This study employed correlation analysis or Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson r) to reveal a linear relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance.

Findings

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The respondent's profile shows that out of 196 respondents, 59.2% are male administrators and 40.8% are female. The respondent's profile reflected that male respondents took up a higher proportion in the overall sample (196). By looking at the results in Table 1, the respondents' age ranged from 27 to 58 with a mean of 46.07 years and a standard deviation of 7.34 indicating a moderate variation in respondents' age. In terms of current position, the majority of the respondents (50.5%) are the head of departments and the rest are associated with deputy deans (10.7%), deputy directors (19.4%), directors (17.3%), and deans (2%) job positions. Finally, 48.5% of the respondents had 8-15 years management experience, 32.1% in the 16-21 years of employment, 11.2% less than 7 years of operational experience, and 8.2% with at least 22 years of management experience.

Table1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic	Category	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
Gender	Male	116	59.2		
	Female	80	40.8		
Age	<39	49	25	46.07	7.34
	40-49	80	40.8		
	>50	67	34.2		
Current Title	Dean	4	2		
	Deputy Dean	21	10.7		
	Director	34	17.3		
	Deputy Director	38	19.4		
	Head of departments	99	50.5		
Management Experience	<7	22	11.2	2.37	.79
	8-15	95	48.5		
	16-21	63	32.1		
	>22	16	8.2		

Reliability Analysis

The result of the reliability analysis is presented in Table 2. It can be seen from the table Cronbach’s Alpha’s value of more than 70%. This indicates a high internal consistency of the instrument.

Table2: Reliability Analysis

Variables	N of Item	Cronbach’s Alpha
Emotional Intelligence	33	.73
Job Performance	22	.95

Correlation Analysis

This study aims to determine whether any association exists between emotional intelligence and job performance. Concerning the above objective, the following research question was formulated to examine the association between emotional intelligence and job performance.

Is there any association between academic administrators' emotional intelligence and their job performance at Malaysian universities?

The following table 3 illustrates the association between EI and job performance among educational administrators. Pearson Product-moment Correlation Coefficient was employed to examine this association. To ensure the existing data were normally distributed the initial analyses was conducted, the results revealed the normality, linearity and homoscedasticity assumptions were not violated. A correlation coefficient of 0.53 was noted between emotional intelligence and job performance. According to Guilford's rule of thumb (1956), there was a moderate association between EI and job performance. There was a positive correlation between EI and job performance ($r = 0.53$, $n = 196$, $p < .001$). Therefore, individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence present high levels of job performance.

Table3: Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Between independent and dependent variables

Variables	1	2
(1) Job performance	1	
(2) Emotion Intelligence	.530**	1

Consequently, the results of Pearson Correlation Coefficient revealed that emotional intelligence and job performance are positively associated. Moreover, the result of this research was consistent with former studies namely, Cote and Miners, (2006), Sy *et al.* (2006), Shamsuddin and Rahman, (2014). These researchers postulated that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role to enhance the level of job performance. Higher institutions are capable of arranging the special programs to develop emotional intelligence among academic administrators to promote and enhance job performance. Conversely, as Shooshtarian, Ameli, and Lari, (2013) stated in their study, emotional intelligence and job performance were not related. However, previous studies found the significant and positive association between administrators' emotional intelligence and their job performance. Also, the results of this study were in line with other prior researchers such as (Vahidi, et al., 2016; Greenidge et al., 2014; Shooshtarian, et al., 2013) and other outstanding researchers namely, Goleman (2007b), O'Boyle *et al.*, (2011). Goleman, (2007) who argued that individual with a higher level of emotional intelligence achieve a higher level of success and performance in organizations. Besides, the findings of the current study are in harmony with Olatoye, Akintunde, & Yakasai's

(2010) studies, which revealed that emotional intelligence and human behaviour correlated positively with employees' performance and working attitude.

Conclusion and Research Implications

This article aimed to find whether emotional intelligence is related to job performance among academic administrators. The success of academic administrators depends on having a high level of emotional intelligence and plays a crucial role to promote job performance and job efficiency. According to the literature, academic administrators are supposed to take into account the following aspects if they tend to increase job performance.

Emotional intelligence plays an important role to increase the efficiency of job performance, so academic administrators who develop emotional intelligence will achieve success in the job. Besides, emotional intelligence is a combination of both perceptual and technical skills, and the progress of individuals in job performance is determined by the level of emotional intelligence. Academic administrators' job performance entail a higher level of emotional intelligence comparing to ordinary staffs since they are required to have an interaction to deal with faculty members. Therefore, academic administrators' job performance efficiently influence the competitive environment of human resource in higher education. As a result, academic administrators' emotional intelligence level enhance job performance in higher education institutes.

The findings revealed that EI positively correlated with the job performance of academic administrators since they are required to develop more interpersonal interactions at higher educational institutes (Daus & Ashkanasy, 2005). It has been investigated that the way academic administrators manage emotional intelligence competencies, significantly influenced performance and behaviours. Consequently, academic administrators who have a higher level of emotional intelligence behave positively towards employees to encourage them to promote the level academic achievement.

The findings of this investigation present several implications. First, administrators can practically incorporate emotional intelligence measurement instrument into the recruitment and selection processes of members, particularly in the higher educational institutes. Second, as mentioned before, emotional intelligence positively related to job performance, hence emotional intelligence training is suggested to be held for higher educational employees to apply some effective strategies to improve and promote their job performance in educational settings. It is advisable to incorporate emotional intelligence training programs to enhance academic administrators' job performance by modifying and adjusting their behaviours when interacting with faculty members.

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