

# Examining Young Adults' Emotional Intelligence at Selected Malaysian College: A Cross-Sectional Study

Ker Shin Tee, Foo Bee Keh (PhD)\*, Wendy How, Hooi Shien Loh, Chen Zheng Goh

Department of Guidance & Counselling Psychology, New Era University College, 43000, Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia.

Email: kershin.tee@newera.edu.my, foobee.keh@newera.edu.my,  
wendy.how@newera.edu.my, hooishien.loh@newera.edu.my,  
chenzheng.goh@newera.edu.my

\*Corresponding Author

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## Abstract

Transition to university is one of the significant development challenges among young adults. The transition process requires them to adjust to new academic circumstances, adopt different learning styles, establish a healthy social network, and be more independent in handling tasks. The adaptation is determined, to a large extent, by the level of emotional competency and autonomy young adults develop to help them cope with the stressors in life—surprisingly, emotions are perhaps the "critical component" to predict youth adults' behaviour dynamics. A critical and neglected component of "emotional intelligence (EI)" can be the protective factor for young adults in the transition process. Although EI brings adaptive outcomes to young adults' development, only a few studies conducted to examine Malaysian young adults' EI in Jitra, Malaysia. For the methodology, the current study utilized the cross-sectional survey method to assess the effects of gender and fields of study on young adults' EI using the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale (SSREI). Data analysis indicated no significant difference among gender in the EI. While a significant difference was discovered in the aspect of EI among students from diverse certificate programmes. The results presented that there is still room for Malaysian students to improve their EI, especially in emotion perception. Malaysian young adults might need further guidance and improved EI skills to become more emotional competence. The researchers also recommended that further study could focus more on developing EI modules, assessing the impacts of gender and fields of study on the development of young adults.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Young Adults, Community College, Gender, Fields of Study

## Introduction

It is observed that most Malaysian college students are young adults aged 18 to 25. Conceptually, young adults in this developmental stage struggle with feeling in-between,

uncertainty, and ambiguity (Kok, 2015; Syed & Mitchell, 2013). Cheng et al. (2015) have also viewed it as a critical developmental stage for the young adult-aged college population because the transition to college is always full of unpredictable variables like entering new friend relationships, exploring unfamiliar living arrangements, and academic circumstance. It is critical to understand that, during this transition, most young adults are still battling with their identity, and some have even refused to be recognized as complete adults (Arnett, 2000). They are striving to master these surges of developmental changes caused by inner and outer factors, including their interests, negative affect, ambitions, and ways of life they want to adopt in future (Liu et al., 2023). It is a journey that each young adult will travel through. Sure, young adults will almost definitely have trouble coping with an overload of emotions and conflicts as they develop through the changes from immature into independent adults.

Mayer and Salovey (1989) described EI as a vital component of social intelligence that enables individuals to control one's and others' emotions, utilize emotions in guiding thoughts and behaviours, and differentiate emotions (as cited in Akduman et al., 2015). Thus far, EI has often been used to successfully predict young adults' adaptation and adjustment to education circumstances (Abdullah et al., 2010; Austin et al., 2010). A person's capability to manage emotions and cope with burdensome tasks is central to the EI. A well-known EI researcher, Goleman (1995), provided a rational argument for EI. He asserted that EI is important because it positively correlates with emotional well-being, health, career, family relationship and performance in everyday life. The positive view on EI has also been supported by Torubeli and Ambakederemo (2013), who claimed that individuals with high EI are more excellent in problem-solving abilities, performance, and interpersonal relationships than those deficient in these skills. Understanding as much as possible about the young generation is crucial for educators to be fully prepared to avoid disturbance and resistance within broader education contexts. Therefore, focusing on cognitive development and identifying the social, psychological, and emotional growth young adults have reached as part of the supporting process when they experience this transition.

To control the confounding variables, the current study also attempts to discover how fields of study and gender could significantly influence young adults' EI. One study was conducted at Ataturk University to investigate the EI levels of students from three different academic fields, including health, social, and natural sciences. The researchers discovered that students from social sciences scored the highest, while the natural science students achieved the lowest total mean scores in the EI assessment (Özlü et al., 2016). The study emphasized the necessity of inculcating a social sharing environment and re-directing curriculum regulation in higher education settings to ensure the students' EI can be facilitated in the proper pathway. Sensitive to this tendency, Kant (2019) also provided evidence that university students from different programmes performed differently in EI assessment. Contents of curriculum weighted heavily on verbal lessons and human interaction may facilitate students' emotional abilities, resulting in high EI test scores. To have a better insight on young adults' EI capabilities, the current research attempted to investigate the Malaysian young adults' EI in a selected Malaysian higher education institute via self-report EI assessment. Meanwhile, the study also looked at how gender and fields of study impact the domains of EI among young adults.

### Problem Statement

Challenges Challenges in relation to young adults are exposing in an ever-changing circumstance. They have been surrounded with wide-ranging media information, interpersonal relationship, the pressure of achievements, learning environments, interactive networking and games that increasingly influence their development. All these influences will affect young adults' minds and behaviours. The ways they interact with peers and their strategies to cope with everyday stressors of everyday life depend heavily on their perception of the world and media information.

The higher education setting is, most directly, one of the significant life-developmental circumstances in which lays the foundation for young adults to discover their potentials, beliefs, values, and interests. Entering a higher education environment could have a remarkable impact on young adults' physical, psychosocial, academic, and emotional development. Transitioning to college successfully will promote positive developmental changes which enable young adults to become more independent, mature and competent. Yet many literatures have given evidences that, in actuality, this is not so. A substantial of mental health issues like emotional disorders, suicidal ideation, adjustment issues, anxiety, and depression are more likely to occur in early adulthood, particularly in the initial stage of transition to higher education (Abdullah et al., 2010; Kok et al., 2015; Ramli et al., 2018). Lack of emotional regulation and healthy coping strategies can be the risk factors that lead to poor college experiences among this population. The situation can be deteriorated when young adults fail to meet lecturers and family's expectations on academic achievement. Inadequate and helpless feeling can subsequently threaten young adults' self-esteem, and their psychological wellness might be affected.

In Malaysia, a study to investigate final year undergraduates' EI was conducted in 10 Malaysian public universities. The findings discovered that 1593 out of 3101 (51.37%) students performed poorly in the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory: Short (EQ-i:S), and only 1506 of them scored high in the EI assessment (Marzuki et al., 2012). However, the results were slightly different from another study conducted by Talip and other researchers (2019), which explored the correlation between EI and perception of stress among 460 Malaysian undergraduates. They identified 13.3 % of undergraduates scored low in Assessing Emotions Scale (AES), while 71.7% of them were moderate in EI level, and only 15.0% of them were able to achieve high in the EI self-report test.

Although majority of undergraduates were average in EI scores, the finding presented that there is still room for this population to improve their EI skills. It can be an issue for Malaysian young adults with low EI because it has been proved that individuals with low EI skills always face problems in understanding and managing negative emotions when distressed (Aldao et al., 2010). As recommended, more studies on Malaysian undergraduates' EI skills are needed, as it will help to provide better insights into young adults' emotional abilities and the possible learning curriculum that might help enhance their EI skills.

Since only a few studies have been implemented to investigate young adults' EI in Malaysian colleges (Ebinagbome & Nizam, 2016), the study's central goals were to examine the young adults' EI and other influential factors that might influence their EI. The current study is significant because it serves as a steppingstone to understand young adults' EI in college settings, especially in gender and certificate programmes. The study also provides some fundamentals on establishing EI training programmes in higher educational settings. Indeed, government, educators, and professionals should care deeply about young adults' development to help them develop a healthy and positive character.

### Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the present study seeks to investigate the following objectives:

1. To investigate the differences in EI among male and female students at a selected college setting.
2. To investigate the differences in the EI between participants from four certificate programmes at a selected college.

### The Dimensions of EI

Recently, the EI has become a hot-discussed intelligence domain in literature. EI has gradually garnered popularity in education, partly because of its positive contributions to human development. However, in real life, every person displays different qualities of EI skills, while their ability to dominate EI will always determine the adaptive consequences in various circumstances (Cherniss, 2010). The basic demonstration of EI includes a person's capability to voluntarily manage, inhibit, present, and activate emotional reactions to fit or adapt to specific social events. Nevertheless, there are controversies regarding the EI's nature, ideas, and conceptions. Although there is still much disputations and bitter criticism over EI, many studies suggest the ability-based model developed by Mayer and Salovey (2000) as one of the most influential EI models that reflects what EI means (Cherniss et al., 2016; Ciarrochi et al., 2006). Since the ability-based model shows promise, many investigations need to be done to understand its attributions and refine the measurement means.

As mentioned earlier, the core of EI focuses on a person's ability to perceive, use, understand and manage emotions (Fernández-Berrocal & Extremera, 2006; Maul, 2012; Mayer et al., 1999; Schutte et al., 2013). The first dimension is the ability to accurately identify inputting emotional information, expression, and appraisal of emotions in self and others. Basically, those with high emotional perception are good at recognizing postures, tones, pitches, body postures, gestures, and facial expressions of others. The ability to know the implication, complication, and the emergence of emotions are all under emotional understanding. Capacity in using emotions includes utilizing emotions to enhance thinking processes, like prioritizing information. Positive and negative emotions could also impact information processing styles and memory. It is evidenced that people are more flexible, creative, generous, and effective in making decisions when in a positive mood. On the other side of the coin, negative emotions lead to a more careful, vigilant, critical, and comprehensive processing style. The last EI dimension concerns regulating emotions, such as desensitizing, modifying, improving emotional responses, and implementing emotional management in oneself and others. People with high EI use emotional management skills to enhance interpersonal relationships, inhibit aggressive behaviours and impulses, and negative affect in the social context (Aldao et al., 2015).

### The Development of EI

The disputation for the intertwine between thought and emotion can be dated back to the two-decade period. From 1900 to 1969, researchers often viewed emotions as irrelevant to or relatively separate from human cognition. During that period, emotion was conceived as hazardous and largely the product of pathology (Ciarrochi et al., 2006). Then, from 1970 to 1989, some psychologists began to relook at how emotions and thoughts influence one another. As a result, the terms "intrapersonal intelligence" and "social intelligence" were created to explain an individual's ability to recognize and symbolize emotions.

From 1990 to 1994, the concept of EI emerged as a potential area relevant to cognitive functioning. Several researchers became aware of sweeping generalizations on human intelligence that are more on the results of the Intelligence quotient (IQ) (Cherniss et al., 2016). Generally, the intelligence test is widely adopted to examine the domains related to cognition processing, such as memorization, comprehension, perception, reasoning, and processing. Despite of its popularity, many people oppose and criticize intelligence tests due to its overgeneralization and misapplication of results on human performance. At present, the controversy over emotion has shifted from the time where emotion is viewed as harmful and disruptive to a more significant component that plays a pivotal role in boosting, motivating, and enhancing productivity in complicated intellectual works (Gayathri & Meenakshi, 2013).

EI receives recognition from the public and educators that EI learning should be implemented and taught in the school curriculum. The myth that exceptional academic performance will bring a head start in the workforce remains questionable. In addition of relying upon cognitive intelligence, there is a critical ability alongside with the emotional portion of the human brain. EI ability can guide actions and decision-making and will always leap into actions far more quickly than rational thinking. Various studies have presented favourable results in improving other adaptive resources, including positive social connection, functioning coping strategies, prosocial acts, and academic performance (Austin et al., 2010; Görgens-Ekermans et al., 2015; Song et al., 2010). The premise that incorporating emotional learning increases the likelihood of enhancing students' academic achievements has also been supported in several studies. Also, some researchers affirmed that EI could be the protective factors that positively influence young adults' development (Cheung et al., 2014; Hill & Maggi, 2011; Howell & Miller-Graff, 2014). EI can have an influential effect on behavioural and cognitive functioning. Therefore, it is debated that young adults with excellent EI skills will probably be excellent at applying these skills to cope with challenges and attain better adjustment in academic circumstances.

Another significant line of study further supported that EI has remarkable effects in forecasting social interaction and academic performance of undergraduates with an average age of 22 after controlling for general mental health and personality traits (Song et al., 2011). Cognitive intelligence seems not the unique factor in dictating students' success, while the "non-intellectual" attribute like emotional literacy is as important as, or somehow goes beyond the cognitive intelligence. Therefore, assessing young adults' EI skills could be beneficial as this will help discover Malaysian young adults' emotional abilities and serve as a steppingstone for exploring the needs of EI learning in Malaysia. The current study will bring up this topic in the recent research to understand the need for EI learning among Malaysian young adults.

## **Methodology**

The study adopted cross-sectional research to investigate young adults' EI in a selected Malaysian college. Approximately two hundred and twenty-eight young adults studying at the Bandar Darulaman Community College (BDCC) in Jitra were selected for the study. For the inclusive criteria, BDCC students from diverse socioeconomic statuses, cultures, and races with an age range of 18 to 25 years old were the potential participants to be selected in the research. Master and PhD students and students who are not studying at BDCC will not be selected for the research.

The respondents in this study were two hundred and twenty-eight certificate students studying at BDCC in Jitra. All the intended respondents from diverse cultures, socioeconomic backgrounds and ethics were selected using a cluster sampling method. For the measurement instrument, the researcher employed Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale (SSREI) to assess the levels of EI among college students. The SSREI is a self-reported instrument widely applied to measure students' EI in college (George & Agnes, 2011; Gong & Paulson, 2016). This instrument has 33 items categorized into four emotional dimensions, which include Perception of Emotion (PER), Managing Own Emotions (MOE), Managing Others' Emotions (MOTE), and Utilization of Emotions (UE), as indicated in Table 1. As provided by Schutte et al. (1998), the internal consistency of this measure was .87, with a test-retest reliability of .78.

Table 1

*Dimensions and items of SSREI*

Dimensions	Items
PER	5, 9, 15, 18, 19, 22, 25, 29, 32, 33
MOE	2, 3, 10, 12, 14, 21, 23, 28, 31
MOTE	1, 4, 11, 13, 16, 24, 26, 30
UE	6, 7, 8, 17, 20, 27

**Procedures of Data Collection**

Students from BDCC were asked to mark their emotional attributes on a five-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This study selected students from four certificate programmes, including Computer and Support System (CSS), Draughtsmanship (DM), Electrical Installation (EIS), and Light Vehicle Service (LVS). Cluster sampling was used for the respondents' selection. First, each certificate programme was categorized into four levels (semester one, semester two, semester three and semester four) and written on 16 pieces of paper for sampling purposes. Then, by using the fishbowl techniques, the researcher randomly selected one paper in the box for each programme.

After selection, potential respondents were asked to attend the briefing via WhatsApp or phone call. The researchers used 15 minutes to brief about the objectives, rights and responsibilities, and respondents' consent to join the study. Subsequently, all respondents were required to complete the SSREI within 5 to 10 minutes and submit the questionnaire on time. After completion, data collected from participants were analyzed using Statistic Package for Social Science (IBM SPSS) software. All data have been checked to ensure its' normality and no missing data prior to descriptive and inferential statistical analysis.

**Results**

Table 2 below shows that all EI constructs and the total EI scores were normally distributed. After removing invalid and extreme values in the data set, the results indicated the skewness and kurtosis ranged between -1 and +1. Normal data distribution occurs when skewness and kurtosis values indicate zero or almost near to zero (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Another way to examine distribution of data could be done through examine the value of mean and median. The value between the mean and median should be close to each other to represent a symmetrical distribution of data.



Table 2

*Normality of the data*

Dimension	Skewness	Kurtosis	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
PER	-.040	.465	34.0044	34.0000	3.48003
MOE	-.295	.515	34.2952	35.0000	3.87254
MOTE	-.552	.103	28.3744	29.0000	3.58165
UE	-.119	-.373	22.3744	22.0000	3.06794
<b>Total EI</b>	-.298	.214	119.0485	119.0000	11.50038

The respondents of the study were randomly selected through the cluster sampling from one of the community colleges in Jitra, Malaysia. Table 3 illustrated that 71.4% of the respondents were male (n=162), and 28.6% were female (n=65). Among the respondents, approximately 81.1% were Malays (n=184), 12.3% were Indians (n=28%), 3.1% were Chinese, and 3.5% were others. The ratio for age groups showed that 88.5 % of samples were between 18 to 19 years old (n=201), 7.5 % of participants were between 20 to 21 years old (n=17), 2.2% of participants were between 22 to 23 years old (n=5), and 1.8% of them were between 24 to 25 years old (n=4). Besides, the demographic presented that 28.2 % of respondents were selected from the LVS programme (n=64), 22% were CSS programme (n=50), 30.4% of them were EIS programme (n=69), and lastly, 19.4% of respondents were appointed from DM programme (n=44).

Table 3

*Demographic background of community college students*

Categories	N	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	162	71.4
Female	65	28.6
Total	227	100.0
<b>Races</b>		
Malays	184	81.1
Indians	28	12.3
Chinese	7	3.1
Others	8	3.5
Total	227	100.0
<b>Age</b>		
18-19	201	88.5
20-21	17	7.5
22-23	5	2.2
24-25	4	1.8
Total	227	100.0
<b>Certificate Programmes</b>		
Light Vehicles Service	64	28.2
Computer & Support System	50	22.0
Electrical Installation	69	30.4
Draughtsmanship	44	19.4
Total	227	100.0

Table 4

*Percentages of Score in EI constructs*

Dimensions	Sum of Scores	Total	Mean	Std. deviation	Sum of score in respective dimension (%)
PER	7719	11350	34.0044	3.48003	68%
MOE	7785	10215	34.2952	3.87254	76%
MOTE	6441	9080	28.3744	3.58165	71%
UE	5079	6810	22.3744	3.06794	75%

Table 4 presented the percentages of the sum in each construct. It was evident that the PER is the lowest (68%), followed by MOTE (71%), UE (75%), and the highest was the MOE (76%). This reflected participants at community colleges scored slightly low in the aspect of PER.

Table 5

*Dimension mean, standard deviations, t-value, and effect size of gender.*

	Male (N=165)		Female (N=65)		Group (N=227)			
	M	SD	M	SD	T	Df	p	d-Score
<i>Measure</i>								
PER	33.80	3.49	34.51	3.44	-1.383	225	.168	.184
MOE	34.28	3.78	34.34	4.13	-.106	225	.915	.014
MOTE	28.33	3.26	28.48	4.30	-.243	94.95	.809	.050
UE	22.33	2.91	22.49	3.45	-.366	225	.715	.049
<i>Total Score</i>								
EI	118.74	11.01	119.82	12.70	-.636	225	.526	.085

To examine the differences of gender in EI, Independent sample t-test were applied. As shown in Table 5, there were no significant mean scores between gender on four EI dimensions: PER,  $t(225) = -1.383$ ,  $p > .05$ , MOE,  $t(225) = -.106$ ,  $p > .05$ , MOTE,  $t(94.95) = -.243$ ,  $p > .05$ , and UE,  $t(225) = -.366$ ,  $p > .05$ . In addition, the results also revealed that there was no significant difference in the scores of EI between males and females,  $t(225) = -.636$ ,  $p = .526$ . Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. Males scored at about the same results as females.



Table 6

*One-way ANOVA of the EI constructs and Total EI score*

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
PER	Between Groups	67.669	3	22.556	1.884	.133
	Within Groups	2669.327	223	11.970		
	Total	2736.996	226			
MOE	Between Groups	85.213	3	28.404	1.917	.128
	Within Groups	3304.012	223	14.816		
	Total	3389.225	226			
MOTE	Between Groups	223.216	3	74.405	6.201	.000
	Within Groups	2675.956	223	12.000		
	Total	2899.172	226			
UE	Between Groups	149.151	3	49.717	5.605	.001
	Within Groups	1978.021	223	8.870		
	Total	2127.172	226			
Total scores EI	Between Groups	1204.641	3	401.547	3.122	.027
	Within Groups	28685.826	223	128.636		
	Total	29890.467	226			

The research used one-way ANOVA to determine the differences in EI between participants from four certificate programmes. The table 6 revealed that there was no significant difference in PER,  $F(3, 223) = 1.884, p > .05$  and MOE,  $F(3, 223) = 1.917, p > .05$  among students from four certificate programmes. While, there were significant differences in MOTE,  $F(3, 223) = 6.201, p < .05$ , UE,  $F(3, 223) = 5.605, p < .05$  and total EI,  $F(3, 223) = 3.122, p < .05$  among samples from EIS, CSS, DM, and LVS. In multiple comparisons, the Post Hoc tests indicated that significant differences existed between respondents from LVS and EIS, CSS and EIS, EIS and DM in the domain of MOTE. For the domain of UE, it is found that significant differences appear between samples from programmes of EIS and CSS, as well as EIS and DM. Lastly, the findings also demonstrated differences between respondents from CSS programme and EIS programmes in the total EI.

## Discussion

As proved, EI is the dominant driver of most adaptive outcomes in higher education institutes (Görgens-Ekermans et al., 2015; Howell et al., 2014; Jameson et al., 2016). Utilizing EI in a meaningful way, young adults may be able to adjust well in the transition process and establish healthy interpersonal relationships with peers in higher education settings. The results of the present study, however, revealed that most of the young adults in community college scored a medium level of EI in the assessment. This indicated that college students need emotional and social skills to succeed in both academic and interpersonal contexts instead of focusing only on young adults' academic knowledge and technical skills.

In addition, the present study disclosed an exciting finding that most of the young adults in community college were good in the dimension of MOE. Yet, most of them reported a medium rating on the PER. Some of the emotional expressions are universal, but how, when and where emotions are expressed and perceived is determined by culture (Gendron et al., 2014). In some cultures, like collective culture, people tend to believe that expressing emotions in front of others is improper and should be avoided in public circumstances (West & Turner, 2011).

Yet, suppression of emotions doesn't mean people from collective culture have no emotions. Sometimes, in a collective culture, individuals may selectively restrain or display

emotions that suit the expectations of family and society (Satterfield, 2017). Malaysian young adults might be more inclined to suppress their emotions in the social arena due to their cultural idiosyncrasies. Although most Malaysian young adults rated slightly low in the aspect of PER, it doesn't mean they are not skilful in emotional perception or expression. Due to cultural restraint, they may selectively express their emotions only to those close to them.

The findings on gender's EI were contradicted with another study performed in Malaysia context. Naghavi and Redzuan (2011) claimed that females are better at emotional expression than males in the EI domain. However, the current study showed no significant difference among gender in the aspect of EI. The contradiction in the results might be due to the imbalance gender ratio in the study. Obviously, female participants were less than male. In addition, samples selected in one educational setting might not be able to represent the whole targeted population in the study. Due to this reason, the researchers recommended that further investigation on EI among gender are worthy and must be performed in various educational settings to re-ensure its' influence on gender' EI.

Lastly, the results illustrated a significant difference in the level of EI among students from the four certificate programmes. As mentioned in the previous works of literature, learning circumstances, peer interaction, teaching contents and interests in learning could be the potential factors that lead to this difference (Özlü et al., 2016). Regarding this, the present study suggested Malaysian researchers further exploring students' EI competence in different academic fields, so that good principle and knowledge can be added to this point. From the results, the researchers discovered that the effort of developing Malaysian young adults' emotional competency through EI learning still lags. The challenges can be met by infusing emotional learning into higher education curriculum to enhance young adults' emotional literacy. Therefore, the implication of this study would be needed to establish emotional education such as online EI training formally and to provide concrete guidelines for EI practices in higher education institutes. Ultimately, the researchers support the opportunity of implementing EI research related to the influence of role expectation, gender, and cultural practices among young adults.

Table 7

*Summary of the related findings*

Objectives	Hypothesis	Results
O1: To determine the differences of EI among male and female students at a selected college setting.	H1(a): There are no significant differences of PER among male and female students at a selected college setting.	Supported
	H1 (b): There are no significant differences of MOE among male and female students at a selected college setting.	Supported
	H1 (c): There are no significant differences of MOTE among male and female students at a selected college setting.	
	H1 (d): There are no significant differences of UE among male and female students at a selected college setting.	Supported
	H1 (e): There are no significant differences of total EI among male and female students at a selected college setting.	Supported

Supported

O2: To determine the differences of the EI between participants from four certificate programmes at a selected college.	H2 (a): There are no significant differences of the PER between participants from four certificate programmes at a selected college.	Supported
	H2 (b): There are no significant differences of the MOE between participants from four certificate programmes at a selected college.	Supported
	H2 (c): There are no significant differences of the MOTE between participants from four certificate programmes at a selected college.	Rejected
	H2 (d): There are no significant differences of the UE between participants from four certificate programmes at a selected college.	Rejected
	H2 (e): There are no significant differences of the Total EI between participants from four certificate programmes at a selected college.	Rejected
		Rejected

## Conclusion

In summary, EI plays a notable role in young adults' development. The findings from this research are designed primarily to identify whether there are gender and programme differences in the aspects of EI among young adults in tertiary education settings. Based on the results, no EI differences were found between males and females in the college. However, there were significant differences in EI among participants from different certificate programmes. The findings are significant as it helps the researchers to identify the potential influential variables such as cultural differences, gender, and programmes of study that might impact the development of EI among young adults in the Malaysia context. In addition, the results also support the necessity of implementing EI learning in higher education to improve Malaysian young adults' adaptation, performance, and professional success. Furthermore, from the theoretical perspective, the research highlighted the importance of incorporating dimensions of EI: (1) perception of emotion, (2) utilization of emotion, (3) understanding of emotion, (4) managing own emotion, and (5) managing other's emotion into the academic curriculum or training through adequate experimental designs in future investigations. Finally, this research's findings lay a foundation that suggests that EI could be learned through proper training, and the programmes of study could be one of the potentially influential factors on young adults' EI.

## Declarations of Interests

No conflict of interest in the research.

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