

# Emotional Intelligence, Prosocial Behaviours, and Coping Responses in Young Adults: A Conceptual Framework for Effective Emotional Regulation

Ker Shin Tee<sup>1</sup>, Nor Aniza Ahmad<sup>2</sup>, Samsilah binti Roslan<sup>3</sup>, Norlizah Che Hassan<sup>4</sup>

Department of Foundation of Education, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang Email: kershint@gmail.com, nor\_aniza@upm.edu.my, samsilah@upm.edu.my, norlizah@upm.edu.my <sup>2</sup>Corresponding Author

To Link this Article: http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v12-i3/19097 DOI:

DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v12-i3/19097

Published Online: 15 September, 2023

## Abstract

The traditional viewpoint on emotional disposition holds that emotions can increase a person's chances of success in adaptation and survival in the environment. The current study indicates that many Malaysian young adults, particularly undergraduate students, are vulnerable to emotional regulation difficulties such as stress, anxiety, and depression. University is a critical life-developmental event that lays the framework for young adults to discover their potential, beliefs, values, and interests. Entering higher education has a substantial impact on young adults' physical, psychological, cognitive, and emotional wellbeing. The current research shifts the emphasis of attention to provide a conceptual framework to guide more targeted intervention programs that may aid in the treatment of emotional regulation difficulties in young adults. Emotional intelligence, prosocial behaviours, and positive coping strategies may serve a homeostatic role by allowing the reduction of negative emotions and enhancing the functioning coping strategies among young adults. The conceptual framework will employ existing literature to demonstrate the interrelationships between emotional intelligence, prosocial behaviours, and coping responses, as well as explain how these components interact to predict young adults' emotional regulation. The conceptual framework guides the universities in reconsidering the needs of young adults and paving a new path for intervention programs to help young adults develop healthy emotional regulation skills.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Prosocial Behaviours, Coping Responses, Young Adults

## Introduction

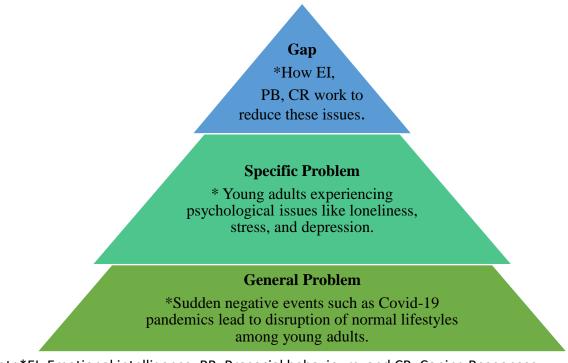
In the recent past, the COVID-19 outbreak has captured the attention of the entire world to research the risk factors of mental health associated with this pandemic (Alyami et al., 2020; Brooks et al., 2020; Duan & Zhu, 2020; Wang et al., 2020). The principal intervention of the majority of the countries focused on the infectious issues created by the SARS-CoV-2

virus on people. However, the unpredictable and hazardous conditions, including the loss of loved ones, during this extended counterwork with the novel virus bring another concern to the surface, which is mental health issues (Polizzi et al., 2020).

A nationwide survey conducted by Qiu et al., (2020) in China with 52,730 respondents revealed that one-third of their respondents, mainly young adults aged 18 and above, suffered psychological disorders during the outbreak. Consistent with Wang and colleagues' (2020) findings, the researchers discovered that over half of their respondents experience moderate to severe psychological distress such as anxiety, sadness, and stress. This phenomenon showed that the psychological impact of trauma could put young adults in danger if they don't know how to adapt to stressors in a healthier way. Lack of coping capability could be the risk factor among this population. Coping responses are ways of dealing with unpredictability and negative feelings. People may not always be entirely conscious of their emotional responses and strategies during this process. Substance abuse is widely regarded as one of the dysfunctional coping strategies used by people to alleviate bad feelings. According to Khantzian's (1997) self-medication theory, the usage of narcotics could ease psychological suffering, allowing people to feel better temporarily during stressful circumstances. The study hypothesized that adolescents with emotional dysregulation and poor adaptive coping are more likely to take narcotics in order to temporarily alleviate psychological suffering and improve their mood. In addition to substance abuse, other risks among this population included internet addiction, online gambling, and surfing the internet, among others.

There is no doubt that unforeseen life events, such as the COVID-19 epidemic, have a significant impact on young people's mental and emotional well-being. Loneliness and other emotional disorders are common at this age and have been linked to negative psychological consequences (Osborn et al., 2021). According to Mohammed and his colleagues' (2020) online qualitative investigation, Malaysian college students had experienced high levels of negative emotions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Negative emotions can lead to unhappiness and little energy in response to life events, such as disappointments. Students are stressed because they are anxious about their academic achievement, the loss of a loved one, typical lifestyle changes, and their vulnerability to COVID-19 disorders (Mohammed et al., 2020; Ting & Essau, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, some Malaysian students sought to distract themselves by watching dramas, spending extra time reading books, doing assignments, communicating with family members and friends via WhatsApp, performing exercises, as well as learning new skills like cooking. However, little is known whether these coping strategies are effective for them and whether performing prosocial behaviours such as helping others could help to boost positive emotions.

Current knowledge on emotional regulation among Malaysian young adults during a tough period like the Covid-19 pandemics are very limited. Furthermore, little is known about how personal resources such as emotional abilities, coping, and prosocial behaviours can foster adaptive functioning in the face of adversity (Osborn et al., 2021). Since the emotional ability to regulate emotional experiences become a protective resource for an individual (Moroń & Biolik-Moroń, 2021), the study attempted to propose the interrelationship between emotional intelligence, prosocial behaviours, and coping responses that address the emotional regulation issues among young adults.



Note\*EI=Emotional intelligence, PB=Prosocial behaviours, and CR=Coping Responses Figure 1: The research problem of the study

## **Theoretical Rationale**

The study presents an overview of the EI ability-based model, process model, and arousal cost-reward model to gain a better grasp of the notions of emotional intelligence, prosocial behaviours, and coping responses. These three models were used and discussed in the context of the current study.

### 1.The El Ability-based Model

The Mayer-Salovey Ability-based Model is an information-processing model that operates across the cognitive and emotional systems. The ability-based model is now seen as the model that best represents the concept of EI among a variety of EI theoretical approaches (Ciarrochi et al., 2006; Fernández-Berroca & Extremera, 2006). Mayer and Salovey (1989) characterized EI as a crucial component of social intelligence that embodied the ability to monitor emotions, discriminate emotions, and use emotions as information to maximize one's thinking and actions (as quoted in Akduman et al., 2015). In general, the model defined emotional intelligence as the ability to evaluate, express, adopt, and manage emotions to support emotional and intellectual growth. This is the most fundamental level of emotional intelligence because it helps people to appropriately evaluate emotional information before acting (Gayathri & Meenakshi, 2013). The second branch is the use of emotions to enhance thoughts. This area entails the ability to use emotions to improve various cognition activities, such as problem-solving (Cherniss et al., 2001; Fernández-Berroca et al., 2006). Positive emotions, such as delight, foster a mental state that is useful for flexible and creative work. Negative emotions, such as sadness, facilitate a mindset in which information is tackled more deliberately, slowly, and critically.

The third branch of the model, emotional understanding, concerns essential knowledge to understand emotional language and to comprehend complex associations between emotions. The most basic competence of emotional understanding includes the ability to

name, group, and arrange emotions into families. Further include the ability to understand the transitions among emotions. The model's third branch, emotional understanding, is concerned with critical knowledge for comprehending emotional language and complicated relationships between emotions. The ability to name, group, and arrange emotions into families is the most fundamental competency of emotional understanding. For example, a student may feel sad for not being able to perform well in the exam and this kind of emotion might shift swiftly to guilt or shame if the student knows he or she did not work hard on it. Finally, the fourth component is emotional management. To reach this level, individuals must first be open to the feeling of emotions and practice engaging in behaviours that result in desirable outcomes for themselves and others. The ability to assist others in regulating emotions is crucial for youths in reducing emotional and psychological suffering.

### 2. Arousal Cost-reward Model

Jane Piliavin and her colleagues (1981) developed the arousal cost-reward model to describe the underlying motivation of prosocial behaviours in the social setting (as quoted in Kenrick et al., 2007). Prosocial behaviours are sometimes influenced by individuals' self-interest rather than moral considerations. In contrast to the concept of altruistic assumptions, the model stated that helping someone else might be gratifying not only for the beneficiary but also for the helper.

The existence of egocentrism and self-interest motivation in social circumstances is normal. Sometimes the drive to help others might stem from the urge to maximize personal gain, reputation, and material fulfillment. For example, students may offer help to assignment members to get better results, maintain positive self-image, as well as increasing the possibility that one day the members will assist them in return (Aronson et al., 2010). Furthermore, the model also emphasized that engaging in prosocial behaviours can aid in reducing negative arousal after witnessing someone suffer from a negative event. The model makes several predictions about prosocial behaviours (Kendrick et al., 2007):

a) When the arousal level is intense. According to the model, the unpleasant affect will produce negative affective reactions. To alleviate a person from this type of unpleasant emotional arousal, helping others can be a strategy to end the unpleasant experience. The current study asserted that understanding emotions such as the ability to empathize with the situation of another person might facilitate prosocial behaviours. As predicted, young people may offer assistance to avoid experiencing emotional distress.

b) When the victim and the helper have a "we" connection. Most of the time, people are more eager to lend a hand to those who have similarities or share an identity (a sense of we-ness). When a crisis involves a life-or-death event, such as a flood, this element defines who to help. According to the present paradigm, young adults are more likely to help those with whom they have a connection, such as family members or friends. Stressing the importance of social responsibilities may increase young adults' social connection, which may aid in the promotion of prosocial behaviours among this population.

c) When the benefits of reducing or eliminating unpleasant arousal outweigh the risks. Observers are more inclined to lend a helping hand to another person rather than leave the emerging setting if the assisting procedure includes a low-cost-high-benefit activity. On the other hand, if the risks of assisting increase, people are more likely to flee from the scene or ignore the victim to alleviate their emotional discomfort. The model is critical because it allows young adults to objectively evaluate the importance of prosocial activities and enhance their awareness of factors that might lead to the bystander effect in critical situations.

## **Process Model**

Lazarus & Folkman (1985) described coping as the constant alteration of psychological and cognitive processes aimed at dealing with a situation that is perceived as depleting a person's resources (as cited in Ciarrochi et al., 2006). Given the importance of cognitive evaluation in determining the right coping responses and the execution of coping responses towards stressful life events, the coping process in a transactional scheme incorporates internal and external stressful state appraisal. In general, the evaluation process involves two fundamental cognitive mechanisms: primary and secondary appraisal.

The primary appraisal is an assessment of the risks and potential advantages of an event or situation. Often, people categorize the situation as being harmful, challenging and benign (Ntoumanis et al., 2009). Harm relates to existing damage and harm; challenge refers to the potential and opportunities for personal growth; and benign refers to a circumstance that does not influence on the person. The secondary appraisal is an evaluation of potential coping resources aimed at addressing the threat. A person might wonder if they can cope with the situation and how confident they are to solve the threat. In this regard, the individual must understand how to utilize suitable coping strategies to avoid, lessen, or change potentially harmful situations (Abdullah et al., 2010; Folkman et al., 1986). The model also presumed that different people might act differently to the stressor even if they are placed in a similar event. This is because their responses depend heavily on the ways they perceive and appraise the situation.

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1985), coping serves two primary purposes. Emotion-focused coping is one of the strategies used to manage stress-related emotions such as anger, guilt, grief, and others. Problem-focused coping focuses on modifying and addressing stressful components to improve person-environment interaction (Ntoumanis et al., 2009). People are more likely to utilize emotion-focused coping strategies such as distraction or avoidance in unalterable situations. For example, during pandemics, young adults may utilize distraction as a time-out strategy, such as watching movies, reading books, or playing games to avoid emotional burnout. Problem-focused coping entails problem-solving and re-appraising challenges if the individual perceives the situation as manageable and controlled (Folkman et al., 1985; Senol-Durak et al., 2011).

Carver et al. (1989) critiqued Lazarus and Folkman's process model for being overly simplicity in presenting the myriad of coping responses performed by humans in everyday situations. Carver and his colleagues asserted that coping responses can be adaptive or maladaptive. They further introduce another coping response known as dysfunctional coping strategies, which are associated with substance use, self-blame, behavioural disengagement, denial, and venting. Dysfunctional coping mechanisms can have a negative impact on a person's development and perhaps deteriorate the situation.

As a result, the coping response that is inherently superior for one problem may not be as successful for another. This requires the best fit between an accurate assessment of the circumstance and the appropriateness of the coping mechanisms (Ntoumanis et al., 2009). The current study considered that situation appraisal required young adults to appropriately identify emotions, body language, and clues in the situation. As a result, increasing young adults' emotional intelligence may alter the efficacy of coping strategies when confronted with stressors.

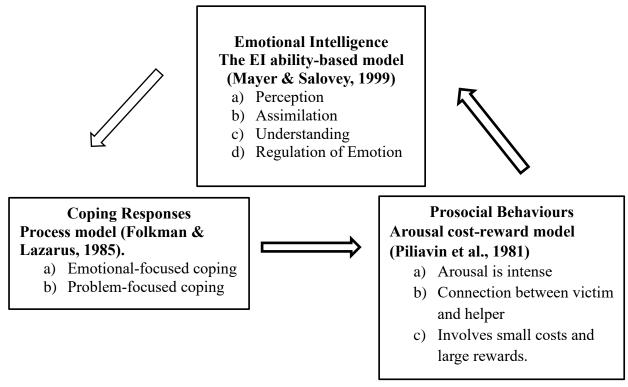


Figure 2: Theoretical Rationale of the Study

## Methodology

The current study thoroughly examined the topics, literature, and theories to find evidence on how emotional intelligence, prosocial behaviours, and coping responses interact with one another. The study presented the conceptual framework to help educators to relook at emotional regulation issues of young adults to help this population develop healthy emotional regulation skills in universities.

## **Conceptual Framework Development**

The conceptual framework take into account three major theories: the EI ability-based model, the process model, and the arousal cost-reward model. The conceptual framework also sheds light on the importance of emotional intelligence in promoting prosocial behaviours and coping mechanisms in young adults. As illustrated in Figure 3, combining these three components into an intervention is critical in predicting emotional regulation ability in young adults.

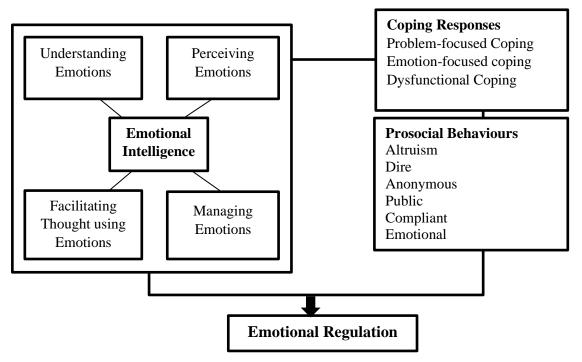


Figure 3: Conceptual Framework

## **Emotional Intelligence among Youths**

Youths are subjected to ever-changing circumstances. They are surrounded by wideranging media and interactive networking. While all these stimuli will have an impact on young adults' thoughts and behaviours, including how they connect with peers, learn, and see the world. After puberty, older adolescents and young adults generally become more adept at controlling their emotions. The frontal lobes of the brain are not fully mature until young people are in their early twenties, according to MRI scans (Allen, 2014). There were also discoveries suggesting young adults are less prone than adolescents to exhibit intense, unpleasant, and transitory emotions, a period of turbulence produced by fluctuating hormones (Allen, 2014). They are more conscious of their emotional shifts and are less defensive than teenagers (Santrock, 2011). They are less defensive and more aware of their emotional swings than teenagers (Santrock, 2011). They are skilled at dealing with emotionally charged situations, which may signify emotional maturity and stability at this period of life.

It is certainly a fallacy to suppose that all young adults may acquire a high level of emotional stability while ignoring personal and environmental issues. If young adults' emotional and coping skills are lacking, they will almost certainly struggle to cope with an abundance of emotions and conflicts. As previously described, it has been discovered that abrupt changes in life, such as isolation, have had a negative impact on the quality of social life among this population. Stress, a loss of social bonds, and a lack of study resources were among the obvious causes of the pandemic (Babicka-Wirkus as al., 2021; Son et al., 2020).

To cope with the severity of the epidemic, young people must actively seek social assistance or self-help by developing a healthier coping mechanism. Lack of emotional intelligence skills, functioning coping strategies, and a social support system, on the other hand, can be dangerous because it can lead to a variety of psychological impairment issues such as depression, emotional disorder, and mental suffering (AL-Naggar & Al-Naggar, 2012; Faleel et al., 2012; Haktanir et al., 2018; Kok et al., 2015; Lindell et al., 2020; Ramli et al., 2018).

A lack of emotional literacy can lead to a variety of difficulties in young adults. Fortunately, empirical evidence suggests that emotional intelligence can improve adaptive functioning such as healthy social connection, academic achievement, positive coping strategies, and helping behaviour (Austin et al., 2010; Görgens -Ekermans et al., 2015; Song et al., 2010). Like reeds in the wind, youths must learn to adjust themselves according to what the environment brings in. Emotions allow youths to reflect on their feelings to make sense of their experience. Youths can integrate their social knowledge and resources with their emotional sense of being. Above all, the study assumed that emotional intelligence could be the crucial factor in sustaining social connection, coping, and self-regulation among youths during difficult periods.

### Prosocial behaviours, Empathy & Emotional Intelligence

From the standpoint of social learning, imitation is one of the natural human behaviours that is seen as a vital process in the socialization of moral and societal standards. Nobel laureate Herbert Somon (1990) acknowledged that the best learners of social norms had a survival advantage (as cited in Aronson et al., 2010). People mimic moral and social standards in society as they are aware that these behaviours could be the preferred behaviours in society. People conduct social norms-altruism to some level because this type of behaviour is regarded as a valuable norm in almost every society. Through the assisting process, people can learn to observe and understand the needs and emotions of others.

Second, it is believed that empathy is the most important motivator for prosocial and moral behaviour. Empathy is defined as an emotional reaction caused by the emotional states of others that allows one to resonate with or experience another's affective state without interfering with one's own emotions (Decety et al., 2015; Lockwood et al., 2014). It is also known as the ability to "put oneself in the shoes of others." Both humans and animals are born with the ability to empathize and engage in prosocial behaviours. Probably, humans are likely born with empathy and altruistic instincts to feel the needs, motivations, distress, and sorrow of others (De Waal & Suchak, 2010).

Salovey and Mayer (1990) proposed that empathy appears to be connected with emotional perception. Perceive emotion is a critical capacity for recognizing basic human emotions such as grief, anger, surprise, happiness, and contempt in social situations. It is related to the ability to accurately interpret or sense one's own and others' feelings and emotions. As previously mentioned, empathy is a skill that is typically possessed by those with strong emotional intelligence. According to Goleman (2001) and Abera (2021), there is a strong link between emotional intelligence and prosocial behaviours. Emotional intelligence is intimately linked to empathy and generosity. While empathy and altruism are important motivators for prosocial behaviour (Jena et al., 2014). Considering empathy to be a valuable resource, any actions or motives that involve caring, helping, or concern for the well-being of others can be classified as empathy-based or prosocial behaviours (Mikulince & Shaver, 2010).

Returning to the association between emotional intelligence and prosocial behaviour, a study conducted by Kaltwasser et al., (2017) revealed that the capacity to accurately interpret emotional expression from faces is positively associated with prosocial behaviour. If emotional perception and expression are thought to be significant components of emotional intelligence, then accurately understanding emotional signals like pain, fear, and grief may elicit people's desire to help others. This is because witnessing another person suffer can generate negative emotional arousal and disturbance, and thus people provide aids

in part to regulate their emotional discomfort (Aronson et al., 2010; Kaltwasser et al., 2017). It increases pleasant emotions such as self-worth and a sense of connection with others through the helping process.

Although research on the reciprocal connections between these two factors is limited, Keefer et al. (2014) revealed the existence of a bidirectional association between trait emotional intelligence and prosocial behaviours. The researchers believed that being involved in prosocial behaviours could promote emotional understanding among the helpers. Based on this assumption, the current study proposed that there is a reciprocal relationship between emotional intelligence and prosocial behaviours. The study asserted that encouraging young adults to participate in emotional intelligence training may be a solution to increasing their prosocial behaviours and emotional regulation when dealing with stress.

## **Emotional Intelligence and Coping Responses**

Coping is said to be an important aspect that will determine the success of adjustment among Malaysian public university freshmen. Coping is defined as the continuous modification or alteration of cognitive and behavioural processes to deal with internal and external pressures (Abdullah et al., 2010; Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). Faleel et al. (2012) demonstrated an existing link between stress and coping capacities, with both factors being adversely connected. Another study found that those with high emotional intelligence understand how to use their self-regulation system as a coping strategy when dealing with stress (Moradi et al., 2011). Instead of avoiding unpleasant events, such people may become skilled at identifying possible dangers and learning to closely monitor threats in social and emotional circumstances (Faleel et al., 2012).

As a matter of fact, how people evaluate stressful situations always determines the coping mechanisms that may be used to deal with the problem. In general, emotional intelligence and coping are inextricably linked because emotional intelligence is always important in regulating emotions, distinguishing emotions, and facilitating emotions in dominating thoughts and activities (Abdullah et al., 2010; Austin et al., 2010). According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), if an individual can accurately perceive and appraise their emotional experience, they will be able to cope successfully in a stressful environment because they will know how and when to express their emotions and can effectively use emotional information to regulate their mood states. The findings are consistent with the findings of Fteiha and Awwad (2020), who discovered that among a group of 265 undergraduates, those with high emotional intelligence are more likely to use active emotional and problem-focused coping strategies.

People with a high level of emotional intelligence are less likely to use avoidanceoriented coping techniques in everyday life (Furnham et al., 2002; Eskay, 2011). According to Austin et al. (2010), the emotional regulation component was positively connected to adaptive coping and task-focused coping while adversely related to neuroticism, stress, and emotion-focused coping. The study found that the capacity to drive and control emotions predicted the usage of good coping mechanisms. The current study seeks to demonstrate a reverse causal effect between these two variables, where a relationship between coping and emotional intelligence may exist. As explained by Libin (2017), coping strategies may be classified into three types: cognitive, behavioural, and emotional. Its success in conquering life's challenges is highly dependent on the scenario as well as the intensity of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural efforts.

#### Interrelations between Emotional Intelligence, Prosocial Behaviours, and Coping

According to the current study, there exist interrelationships between emotional intelligence, prosocial behaviours, and coping reactions. Emotional intelligence is essential motivational element that predicts prosocial behaviours (Martin-Raugh et al., 2016), which are key behaviours in society that strive to improve the welfare of oneself, others, and groups (Bolino & Grant, 2016). As discussed earlier, individuals who perform prosocial behaviours out of the urge to regulate their extensive negative emotions, as a mechanism of escape from the unbearable situation (Jena et al., 2014). Prosocial behaviours improve young adults' problem-solving abilities, reinforce social connections, and raise young self-worth through helping others (Grant & Gino, 2010; Klein et al., 2015; Lambert et al., 2013). In this regard, the researchers considered that young adults with high emotional intelligence are more likely to help others. Furthermore, there is the potentially good effect of encouraging young adults to participate in prosocial activities, which may provide benefits to young adults such as promoting happy feelings and social connection.

A significant body of research has cherished the assertion of adaptive coping as "emotional intelligence in action," believing that the emotional system produces adaptive results such as shaping healthy coping behaviours. Spurred by Goleman's emotional intelligence book drawing parallels between emotional intelligence and coping concepts, the ability of a person to manage conflicts, stress, and difficult activities in social situations is fundamental to emotional intelligence notions. The study hypothesized that persons with high emotional intelligence understand how to use their emotional intelligence to build a strong support system and good coping strategies, which serve as a buffer against daily stressors. On the other hand, the coping strategies chosen by young adults might have an impact on their emotional abilities, depending on the level of effort they are willing to put up.

There may be a link between these two components of emotional intelligence has a reciprocal influence on both coping and prosocial behaviours. Raposa et al. (2015) have shown that engaging in prosocial behaviours is a key component of coping strategies for lowering the negative impact of stress on emotional functioning. Another study found that youngsters who avoid dealing with life's issues are more likely to use avoidant coping techniques. When compared to young adults who employ active coping strategies, the avoidant strategy can result in lower prosocial skills (Memmott-Elison et al., 2020). The nature of these encounters suggests to educators that they should consider providing guidance or intervention to youths in the areas of emotional intelligence, prosocial behaviours, or coping responses to increase their emotional regulation capacity at universities.

In the long run, researchers advised that universities should promote emotional intelligence interventions that focus on young adults' emotional intelligence, prosocial behaviours, and coping skills. Emotional intelligence intervention, as advocated by Durlak and colleagues (2011), facilitates safe, responsive, and loving environments in which teenagers' social and emotional abilities can be fostered. Emotional intelligence intervention is regarded to be a crucial strategy for achieving educational goals and shaping desired social behaviours in young adults, such as functioning coping responses and prosocial behaviours.

The current study assumes that young adults might engage in prosocial behaviour to develop a supportive social network. Individuals who are highly active in prosocial activities typically have stronger social connections with others (Lambert et al., 2013). If helping others benefits the provider, it could be an important component of the stress management strategy. The current study concluded that young adults who are exceptional at perceiving,

interpreting, and managing emotions will engage in prosocial behaviours and healthy coping responses more than those who are not.

Since studies have shown that people with high emotional intelligence often receive greater social support and understand how to use healthy coping strategies wisely when dealing with stressful events or situations (Keefer et al., 2014), the current study hypothesized that improving young adults' emotional intelligence, prosocial behaviours, and coping responses can help to reduce emotional regulation issues among young adults. These three variables will also interact with one another to assist young adults in achieving better emotional functioning, such as being more skilled in emotional regulation and empowered social connections in their society.

### Discussion

The current study is a concept paper that examines the reciprocal relationships between emotional intelligence, prosocial behaviours, and coping responses through a review of past research and hypotheses. The conceptual framework will guide educators in incorporating these three components into the curriculum to help young adults develop emotional regulation skills. The current study stresses the reciprocal relationships of emotional intelligence, prosocial behaviours, and coping responses, which might provide a framework for educators to evaluate the necessity of merging these three components into young adults' learning.

Current research hypothesized that improving emotional intelligence abilities, prosocial behaviours, and healthy coping strategies among young adults could be protective factors in reducing their adjustment and emotional issues in difficult situations like the COVID-19 pandemics. As a result, it is critical to provide emotional intelligence intervention to facilitate young adults' emotional intelligence and coping skills so that they can better cope with emotional disturbances. With basic knowledge of these three components, educators can provide intervention to young adults to reduce potential psychological disorders in any risky situation.

The conceptual framework cannot be tested experimentally, which is the limitation of the study. Therefore, the research advocates for experimental research to determine how emotional intelligence learning that focuses on emotional intelligence components, prosocial acts, and coping skills can help to improve young adults' emotional regulation.

### Conclusion

The study concluded that improving young adults' emotional intelligence, prosocial behaviours, and coping responses are critical components in improving their emotional regulation. Providing emotional intelligence training in universities should never be considered as a waste of money or effort, but rather as a phase of enabling exceptionally capable young adults to deal with people and contribute to society.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

#### Acknowledgements

The authors wish to express their deepest gratitude to the Universiti Putra Malaysia for supporting this article.

# References

- Abera, W. G. (2021). Emotional Intelligence and Pro-Social Behaviour as Predictors of Academic Achievement Among University Students. *International Quarterly of Community Health Education*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0272684x211033447
- Abdullah, M. C., Elias, H., Uli, J., Mahyuddin, R. (2010). Relationship between coping & university adjustment & academic achievement amongst first year undergraduates in a Malaysian Public University. *International Journal of Arts and Sciences*, *3*(11): 379–392.
- Akduman, G., Hatipoğlu, Z., & Yüksekbilgili, Z. (2015). A research about emotional intelligence on generations. *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research & Review*, *3*(4), 124-133.
- Allen, V. (2014). Understanding and Supporting Behaviour through Emotional Intelligence: A critical Guide for Secondary Teachers. UK: Critical Publishing.
- Al-Naggar, R.A. & Al-Naggar, D.H. (2012) Prevalence & associated factors of emotional disorders among Malaysian university students. *International Journal of Collaborative Research on Internal Medicine & Public Health, 4* (7), 1401-1411.
- Alyami, M., Henning, M., Krägeloh, C. U., & Alyami, H. (2020). Psychometric evaluation of the Arabic version of the fear of COVID-19 Scale. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, *19*(6), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-020-00316-x
- Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., & Akert, R. M. (2010). Social Psychology. Pearson Education.
- Austin, E. J., Saklofske, D. H., & Mastoras, S. M. (2010). Emotional intelligence, coping & examrelated stress in Canadian undergraduate students. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 62, 42-50. https://doi.org/10.1080/00049530903312899
- Babicka-Wirkus, A., Wirkus, L., Stasiak, K., & Kozłowski, P. (2021). University students' strategies of coping with stress during the coronavirus pandemic: Data from Poland. *PLoS ONE, 16*(7), 1-27. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0255041
- Bolino, M. C., & Grant, A. M. (2016). The bright side of being prosocial at work, and the dark side, too: A review and agenda for research on other-oriented motives, behaviour, and impact in organizations. *The Academy of Management Annals, 10* (1), 1-94. https://doi.org/10.1080/19416520.2016.1153260
- Bond, B. & Manser, R. (2009) *Emotional intelligence interventions to increase studentsuccess.* Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.
- Brooks, S. K., Webster, R. K., Smith, L. E., Woodland, L., Wessely, S., Greenberg, N., & Rubin, G. J. (2020). The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it: Rapid review of the evidence. *The Lancet, 395*, 912–920. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30460-8.
- Carver, C. S., Scheier, M. F., & Weintraub, J. K. (1989). Assessing coping strategies: A theoretically based approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *56*(2), 267-283. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.56.2.267
- Cherniss, C., & Goleman, D. (2001). The emotionally intelligence workplace: How to select for, measure, & improve emotional intelligence in individuals, groups, & organizations. Jossey-Bass.
- Ciarrochi, J., Forgas, J. P., & Mayer, J. D. (2006). *Emotional intelligence in everday life*. Psychology Press.
- Decety, J., Bartal, I. B.-A., Uzefovsky, F., & Knafo-Noam, A. (2015). Empathy as a driver of prosocial behaviour: highly conserved neurobehavioural mechanisms across species. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences, 371*(1686), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2015.0077

- De Waal, F. B. M., & Suchak, M. (2010). Prosocial primates: Selfish and unselfish motivations. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences, 365* (1553), 2711– 2722. https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2010.0119
- Duan, L., & Zhu, G. (2020). Psychological interventions for people affected by the COVID-19 epidemic. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 7(4), 300-302. https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(20)30073-0
- Eskay, M. (2011). Harmonizing educational differences from an international Perspective. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences*, 6(1), 30-36.
- Faleel, S.F., Tam, C. L., Lee, T.H., Har, W. M., & Foo, Y. C. (2012). Stress, perceived social support, coping capability & depression: A study of local and foreign students in the Malaysia context. *International Journal of Psychological and Behavioural Sciences*, 6(1), 1-7.
- Fernández-Berrocal, P., & Extremera, N. (2006). Emotional intelligence: A theoretical and empirical overview of its first 15 years of history. *Psicothema*, *18*, 7-12.
- Folkman, S., & Lazarus, R. S. (1985). If it changes it must be a process: Study of emotion & coping during three stages of a college examination. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 48 (1), 150-170. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.48.1.150
- Folkman, S., Lazarus, R. S., Dunkel-Schetter, C., DeLongis, A., Gruen, R. J. (1986). Dynamics of a stressful encounter: Cognitive appraisal, coping, and encounter outcomes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *50*(5), 992-1003.
- Fteiha, M., & Awwad, N. (2020). Emotional intelligence and its relationship with stress coping style. *Health Psychology Open*, 7(2), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1177/2055102920970416
- Furnham, A., Pertrides, K., & Spencer-Bowdage, S. (2002). The effects of different types of social desirability on the identification of repressors. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 33, 119-130. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(01)00139-8
- Gayathri, N., & Meenakshi, K. (2013). A literature review of emotional intelligence. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, 2(3), 42-51.
- Goleman, D. (2001). *Emotional intelligence: Perspectives on a theory of performance*. Jossey-Bass.
- Görgens-Ekermans, G., Delport, M., & Du Preez, R. (2015). Developing emotional intelligence as a key psychological resource reservoir for sustained student success. SA Journal of Industrial Psychology, 41(1), 1-13.
- Grant, A. M., & Gino, F. (2010). A little thanks goes a long way: Explaining why gratitude expressions motivate prosocial behaviour. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 98, 946–955. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017935
- Haktanir, A., Watson, J. C., Ermis-Demirtas, H., Karaman, M. A., Freeman, P. D.,
- Kumaran, A., & Streeter, A. (2018). Resilience, academic self-concept, & college adjustment among first-year students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 23*(1) 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025118810666
- Jena, L., Bhattacharyya, P., Hati, L., Ghosh, D., Panda, M. (2014). Emotional intelligence & prosocial behaviour: Multidimensional trait analysis of technical students. *Journal of Strategic Human Resource Management*, *3*(2), 38-47.
- Kaltwasser, L., Hildebrandt, A., Wilhelm, O., & Sommer, W. (2017). On the relationship of emotional abilities and prosocial behaviour. *Evolution and Human Behaviour, 38*(3), 298–308. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2016.10.01

- Keefer, K., Parker, J., & Holden, R. (2014). Reciprocal associations between trait emotional intelligence and prosocial tendencies: A multi-wave longitudinal study. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 60. 1-1. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2013.07.293
- Kendrick, D. T., Neuberg, S. L., & Cialdini, R. B. (2007). *Social psychology: Goals in interaction*. Pearson Education.
- Khantzian, E. J. (1997). The self-medication hypothesis of substance use disorders: A reconsideration and recent applications. *Harvard Review of Psychiatry*, *4*(5), 231–244. https://doi.org/10.3109/10673229709030550.
- Klein, N., Grossman, I., Uskul, A. K., Kraus, A. A., & Epley, N. (2015). It pays to be nice, but not really nice: Asymmetric reputations from prosociality across 7 countries. *Judgment and Decision Making*, 10, 355–364.

https://doi.org/10.1017/s1930297500005167

- Kok, J. K., Van Schalkwyk, G. J., Chan, A.H. W (2015). Perceived stressors of suicide & potential prevention strategies for suicide among youth in Malaysia. *International Journal of School & Educational Psychology*, 3(1), 55-63.
  - https://doi.org/10.1080/21683603.2014.920285 Ambert N M Stillman T F Hicks I A Kamble S Baumeist
- Lambert, N. M., Stillman, T. F., Hicks, J. A., Kamble, S., Baumeister, R. F., & Fincham, F. D. (2013). To belong is to matter: Sense of belonging enhances meaning in life. *Personality* and Social Psychology Bulletin, 39, 1418–1427.
  - https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167213499186
- Libin, E. (2017). Coping intelligence: Efficient life stress management. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 1–7. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00302
- Lindell, A. K., Killoren, SaE.; Campione-Barr, Nicole (2020). Parent-child relationship quality and emotional adjustment among college students: The role of parental financial support. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 1-23. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407520964870
- Lockwood, P. L., Seara-Cardoso, A., & Viding, E. (2014). Emotion regulation moderates the association between empathy & prosocial behaviour. *PLoS ONE*, *9*(5), 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0096555
- Martin-Raugh, M.P., Kell, H. J., Motowidlo, S.J. (2016). Prosocial knowledge mediates effects of agreeableness and emotional intelligence on prosocial behaviour. *Personality and Individual Differences, 90,* 41–49. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.10.0
- Mayer, J., Caruso, D. & Salovey, P. (1999). Emotional intelligence meets traditional standards for an intelligence. *Intelligence*, 27, 267-298.
- Memmott-Elison, M. K., Yu, M., Maiya, S., Dicus, J. L., & Carlo, G. (2020). Relations between stress, coping strategies, and prosocial behaviour in U.S. Mexican college students. *Journal of American College Health, 70*(6), 1–7.

http://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2020.1817035

- Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2010). *Prosocial motives, emotions, & behaviour:The better angels of our nature.* American Psychological Association.
- Mohammed, A. A., Uddin, M. S., & Saidi, A. M. (2020). Covid-19 & movement control order: Stress & coping strategies of students observing self-quarantine. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 10(5), 788–802. http://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v10-i5/7249
- Moradi, A., Pishva, N., Ehsan, H. B., Hadadi, P., & Pouladi, F. (2011). The relationship between coping strategies & emotional intelligence. *Procedia-Social & Behavioural Science*, 30, 748-751.

Moroń, M., & Biolik-Moroń, M. (2021). Trait emotional intelligence & emotional experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in Poland: A daily diary study. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 168, 1-11.

http://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.110348

- Ntoumanis, N., Edmunds, J. & Duda, J. L. (2009). Understanding the coping process from a self-determination theory perspective. *British Journal of Health Psychology, 14 (2),* 249–260. http://doi.org/10.1348/135910708X349352
- Osborn, T., Weatherburn, P., & French, R. S. (2021). Interventions to address loneliness & social isolation in young people: A systematic review of the evidence on acceptability and effectiveness. *Journal of Adolescence*, *93*, 53–79. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2021.09.007
- Piliavin, J. A., Dovidio, J. F., Gaertner, S. L., & Clark, R. D. (1981). *Emergency intervention*. Academic Press.
- Polizzi, C., Lynn, S. J., Perry, A. (2020). Stress and coping in the time of Covid-19: Pathways to resilience and recovery. *Clin Neuropsychiatry*, *17*(2), 59-62. http://doi.org/10.36131/CN20200204.
- Qiu, J., Shen, B., Zhao, M., Wang, Z., Xie, B., & Xu, Y. (2020). A nationwide survey of psychological distress among Chinese people in the COVID-19 epidemic: Implications and policy recommendations. *General Psychiatry*, 33(2), 1-3. http://doi.org/10.1136/gpsych-2020-100213
- Ramli, N. M. H., Alavi, M., Mehrinezhad, S. A., & Ahmadi, A. (2018). Academic stress & selfregulation among university students in Malaysia: Mediator role of mindfulness. *Behavioural Science*, 8 (1), 1-9. http://doi.org/10.3390/bs8010012
- Raposa, E. B.; Laws, H. B.; Ansell, E. B. (2015). Prosocial behaviour mitigates the negative effects of stress in everyday life. *Clinical Psychological Science*, 1-8. http://doi.org/10.1177/2167702615611073
- Santrock, J. W. (2011). Adolescence. McGraw-Hill.
- Salovey, P. & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional Intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality, 63* (6), 503–517. http://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.63.6.503
- Senol-Durak, E., Durak, M., & Elagöz, F. Ö. (2011). Testing the psychometric properties of the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ) in Turkish university students & community samples. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 18, 172–185. http://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.677
- Son, C., Hegde, S., Smith, A., Wang, X., Sasangohar, F. (2020). Effects of COVID-19 on college students' mental health in the United States: Interview survey study. *J Med Internet Res*, 22(9), 1-14. http://doi.org/10.2196/21279
- Song, L. J., Huang, G., Peng, K. Z., Law, K. S., Wong, C.-S., & Chen, Z. (2010). The differential effects of general mental ability and emotional intelligence on academic performance & social interactions. *Intelligence*, 38(1), 137–143. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.intell.2009.09.003
- Ting, C. H., & Essau, C. (2021). Addictive behaviours among university students in Malaysia during COVID-19 pandemic. *Addictive Behaviours Reports, 14,* 1-7. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.abrep.2021.100375

Wang, C., Pan, R., Wan, X., Tan, Y., Xu, L., Ho, C. S., & Ho, R. C. (2020). Immediate

psychological responses and associated factors during the initial stage of the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) epidemic among the general population in China. *International* 

*Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health,* 17, 1-25. http://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17051729