The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Employee Job Performance: A Malaysian Case Study

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Abstract
Employee performance is often considered one of the most important issues in organizational development. Job performance is considered as a multi-dimensional concept by several researchers who did the research on job performance. Considering how to improve employee task performance, the purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of emotional intelligence (EI) on employee job performance in a selected organization in Malaysia. This study specifically examined the direct effect of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management) on employee job performance. Competency based model (Goleman, 1998) has been used in this study to explain the conceptualization of EI. This study employed a quantitative research method and has been participated by 110 respondents. Convenience sampling method has been employed to obtain data from the respondents and the data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22.0**.** The research findings showed that self-management tends to be the strongest predictor towards employee job performance. Practical implications, limitations of the study and directions for future research were also being discussed.
Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Management, Task Performance.

Introduction
Employee performance plays a major role in an organization. In order to survive in the industry and maintaining the competitive edge, organizations put constant pressures to their employee. Performance is an extremely important criterion that linked to the organization success and outcomes (Cheok and O'Higgins, 2011). Previous researchers has agreed that employees should be actively participated in their work physically and mentally in order to deliver outstanding performance (Marc, Susan, and Salovey, 2011). Besides, every organization leaders need to

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ensure that their employees always maintain good performances so that the objectives of the organization will be achieved. However, it is not an easy task in for the employees to maintain their good performance because the environment, workplace and social pressure keep stressing them.

As mentioned by the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) Executive Director, Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan, the number of cases on work-related depression has increased visibly. Meanwhile, the President of the Congress of Union of Employees in the Public and Civil Services Malaysia (CUEPACS) stated that the workers in Malaysia from both government and private sectors are experiencing a relatively high level of living cost. He suggested that the authority need to intervene in this issue as this problem may lead to mental stress among employees (Firdaus, 2017). A study by the National Health Morbidity Survey (NHMS) also found that the mental health problems among adults showed an increase from 10.7% in 1996 to 29.2% in 2015 involving or 4.2 million Malaysians. At the same time, 4 out of 10 Malaysian are said to be suffering from mental health. It is also revealed a higher prevalence of mental health problems among adults from low household income families (Arumugam, 2016). Furthermore**,** Abraham (1999), George (2000) Higgs (2004) and Adel (2017) raised the issue on which competencies of EI could actually influence the employee job performance in workplace.

The outcomes of previous studies have shown mixed results between EI and employee performance. For example, studies by Higgs, 2004; Dulewicz, et al., 2005; Wang et al., 2015; Law et al., 2004; Beck, 2013; Adel, 2017; Chaudry and Usman, 2011; Sahedur and Rabeya, 2017; Danguah, 2014; Daus and Ashkanasy, 2005 have shown that EI has positive impacts towards job performance while studies by Gryn, 2010; Rode, et al., 2007 has found that there is no direct relationship between EI and employee job performance. These inconsistent findings urge for more additional research in testing the relationship between various dimension of EI (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management) and employee job performance. In addition, most EI research is conducted in developed countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. As such, there is a need to validate those instruments developed in the countries mentioned earlier which have different cultural and business settings and to ensure that they are suitable to be used in Malaysian context. Based on previous studies, it is suggested that self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management are important factors that influence task performance. The importance of conducting this research is to identify how EI of employees affect their job performance. This paper intends to fill this gap by focusing on four dimensions of EI which are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. In particular, the aim of this study is to measure the EI and the influence of EI towards employee job performance.

Literature Review
Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Job Performance
Borman (2011) defined employee job performance as the total expected value to the organization of the discrete behavioural episodes that an individual carries out over a standard period. Performance of employees is also measured through the output that they are produced

(Motowidlo, 2003). Borman and Motowidlo (1993) identified task performance and contextual performance as the two types of employee behavior that are crucial for organizational effectiveness. Task performance was defined as behaviours that are directly involved in producing goods or service, or activities that provide indirect support for the organization's core technical processes (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Werner, 2000). In addition, Carmeli et al. (2007) pointed that the work outcomes of an employee's task performance will define the career path of the individual in an organization. On the other hand, contextual performance is defined as individual efforts that are not directly related to their main task functions. Nevertheless, these behaviours are important because they shape the organizational, social, and psychological contexts serving as the critical catalyst for task activities and processes (Werner, 2000).

Later in 2000, Pulakos et.al introduced adaptive performance – the new separate dimension of performance which is defined as the proficiency of individuals to alter their behavior in response to the demands of a new event, situation, task or environmental constraints. There were few researchers that showed the importance of increasing employee job performance by employee job in which when employees tried to improve their quality of works, the organizational goals can be accomplished smoothly by surpassing the challenging and difficult situations. However, nowadays the work environment is very competitive in which employees should have a good EI management in order to face the situation that pressuring them either mentally or physically. Employee job performance matters can also be solved through training or redesigning the environment of workplace (Li *et al*, 2012). Previous researchers have found different results on the effects of EI on job performance. For example, researchers (e.g., Adel 2017; Sahedur and Rabeya, 2017; Wang et al., 2015; Danguah, 2014; Beck, 2013; Chaudhry and Usman, 2011) found that there is positive relationship between EI and job performance. Meanwhile, Gryn (2010) in his research claimed that there is no statistically significant relationship between overall EI and job performance among the call center leaders.

EI is found to be twice as important as technical skills and intellectual skills for job in all levels in which it affects only 20 percent of factors that drive to success in life, whereas the other 80 percent is influenced by other forces (Goleman, 1996). Hence, individual with high EI are able to handle their feelings more effectively by maintaining positive attitude and then progress in their work. The concept of EI was first introduced by Thorndike (1920) by conceptualizing it into three main dimensions namely abstract intelligence, mechanical intelligence and social intelligence. Gardner (2013) later came up with the concept of intra-emotional and inter-emotional intelligence. Salovey and Mayer (1990) suggested a model of EI which deals with the ability of person to regulate their feeling so that a person can show their good emotions through their outcomes of work. Review of literature shows that the conceptualization of EI was explained through two different models which are ability model and mixed model. Ability model defined EI in a similar way with cognitive intelligence (i.e., IQ). On the contrary, mixed model focused on the combination of both non-cognitive models (Bar-On, 1997) and competency-based models (Goleman, 1998).

Goleman (1998) has conceptualized EI into four dimensions, namely self-awareness (the ability to understand one's internal states, preference, resources and intuition) self-management (the

continuous process of controlling, managing and reinforcing our actions and feeling in order to have a good behavior or performance), social awareness (able to notify the feeling of others in order to create a better working environment) and relationship management (the ability of person to evaluate their values and norms in relation to the people around them for its impact). Goleman (1998) stressed that competency-based model explains how an employee who is able to manage himself can perform better than others in which proactive individuals will effectively take part in self-management activities such as setting challenging goals but is achievable, time management, environmental behaviors and self-regulations. Victoroff and Boyatzis (2012) found students or people who rated highly in self-management are more likely to perform their task very well. It is because of their positive attitudes, self-motivation, willingness to learn and ability to adapt made them to have better outcomes.

In explaining the effect of social awareness on employee job performance, the impact of social awareness are more likely depends on the length of time that the people have involved in interacting to each other in order to have better understanding on who they are dealing with, how they can able to approach specific people in certain situations. Hence, the more time an employee spent for orientation process, the better their performance in conducting daily tasks or otherwise relationship is bound to be task oriented (Victoroff and Boyatzis, 2012). It was contended that, past performance can lead to greater impacts over one constituents and work environment when it is practiced effectively. Furthermore, high performance is more likely to exist among employees or persons with very high social relationships among the colleagues they work with as compared to the quiet and the so called anti-social groups. It was believed that the ability for these socially aware in seeking for advice about issues concerning their jobs from knowledgeable superior or subordinates. Therefore, it will motivate employees to look forward in accomplishing their tasks very well and socialize with colleagues in which increasing their own performance as compared to anti-social colleagues which only focusing their own matters (Treadway *et al*, 2013).

Employees with improved relationship management are able to turn around poor performance into a desired one through their wide and positive influence on management, followers and all stake holders which then empowers them to have all the necessary resources at their disposal to enhance their output (Victoroff and Boyatzis, 2012). The more senior or more experienced staff and colleagues are in better position to guide, orient, direct and pull their juniors to do the right things in particular fields that the new entrants are trying to pursue. Moreover, even teams become more functional and performed well when it's comprised of people with high relationship management because they understand on how to associate with peers besides give advantages from different knowledge, skills and abilities.

Based on the above empirical and theoretical evidences, this study posits that:

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between self-awareness and employee job performance
Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between self-management and employee job performance
Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between social awareness and employee job performance

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between relationship management and employee job performance

Theoretical Framework
The framework for this study (see Figure 1) is basically has been adopted from Lam and O'Higgins (2012).
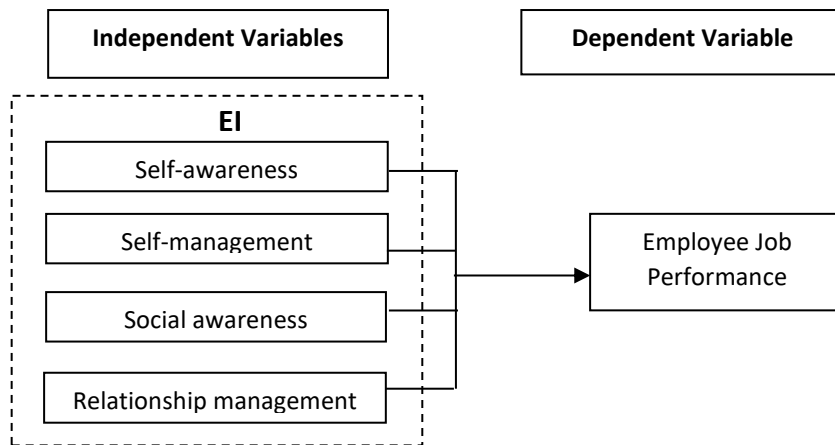

Figure 1: Theoretical framework adopted from Lam and O'Higgins (2012)

Methodology
Sample and Data Collection
This study has employed a non-probability sampling that is convenience sampling method in selecting respondents who are consists of employees working in a selected oil and gas industry in Malaysia. A survey research design was chosen for this study whereby data on employees' perceived self-management, self-awareness, social awareness and relationship management were collected using a structured research questionnaire. A pilot study was conducted prior to distribute the study questionnaires to assess the appropriateness of the questionnaire design. Majority of the respondents agreed that most of the items were clear and understandable. Out of 110 respondents, it has been reported that 52.5% of the respondents are male while 47.5% are female. Meanwhile, about 67.5% of the respondents were married and 32.5% are not married. Besides that, the table indicates that most of the respondents are senior executive that carry about 32.5% of the total respondents while the rest are junior executive, manager, entry level and senior manager which are 25%, 18.8%, 15% and 8.8% respectively.

Measures
All constructs of the study were measured with scales adopted from established measurements.

Employee Job Performance. This study has adopted the 5-items questionnaire constructed by Borman and Motowidlo (1993). These items measure various aspects of employee job performance in the workplace such as "I get sense of personal accomplishment from my work" and "my job enables me to make use of my skills and abilities".

Emotional Intelligence. This study has adopted the 20-items scales by Goleman (1998) which consists of four dimensions (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management). The examples of the items for self-awareness are "I am aware of my strengths and weaknesses" and "I am able to identify my feelings". The examples of self-management items are "I can stay calm in stressful situations" and "I can overcome anxiety in new or challenging situations". Meanwhile, the examples of social awareness and relationship management items are "I understand how people feel by looking at their facial expressions" and "I get impatient with incompetent people" respectively.

Results
Means, Standard Deviation, Correlation and Regression Analysis
The data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows Version 21.0. A hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted to investigate the relationship between EI variables (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management) and employee job performance. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was measured to investigate the bivariate relationship between all study variables. Table 1 shows the means, standard deviation, correlations and reliabilities. The mean value for most of the study variables were above 3.0.

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1.Employee Job performance	4.10	0.59	(.90)				
2.Self-awareness	3.75	0.84	.423**	(.90)			
3.Self-management	4.01	0.66	.700**	.377**	(.93)		
4.Social awareness	3.85	0.89	.365**	.297**	.492**	(.95)	
5.Relationship management	3.36	0.96	.435**	.80	.438*	.179	(.94)

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviation, Correlations and Reliabilities

Notes: Values in parentheses along the diagonal represent coefficient alphas.   *$p<0.05$; **$p<0.01$

Pearson product-moment correlation analysis result shows that most of the variables are significantly correlated with one another. The correlation coefficient (r) of employee job performance and self-awareness is 0.423 and is significant at 0.000. Therefore, it indicates that self-awareness has positive significant association and the strength of association towards EI is low. The result also shows that self-management has a positive significant association with employee job performance and the strength of correlation is high (0.700). This analysis reveals that there is a positive association between social awareness and employee job performance (0.365). However, the strength of correlation is relatively low. Lastly, there is also low positive correlation between relationship management and employee job performance with a correlation coefficients (r) value of 0.435 and significant at 0.000 (p<0.01).

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimates
1	.738[a]	.545	.521	.40911

a.   Predictors: (Constant), Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Management

Table 2 shows the multiple regression analysis result for this study. The findings revealed a R-square value of 0.545. This indicates that 54.5% of the variations in dependent variable (employee performance) is explained by all independent variables (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management). Meanwhile, the other 45.5% is explained by the other independent variables that are not studied in this research.

Table 3: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	15.047	4	3.762	22.475	.000[b]
Residual	12.553	75	.167		
Total	27.600	79			

Table 3 shows the ANOVA generated in this research is also shows significant probability value (0.000) and signifies that all the dimensions of EI which are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management explained significant with employee job performance. Therefore, 54.5% of variance in employee job performance is influenced by self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. The model is statistically significant (F=22.475, p<0.01).

Table 4: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.205	.316		3.819	.000
Self-Awareness	.142	.060	.202	2.366	.021
Self-Management	.493	.093	.542	5.284	.000
Social Awareness	.004	.060	.007	.074	.941
Relationship Management	.110	.053	.180	2.064	.042

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Job Performance

According to Table 4, self-awareness (p<0.05), self-management (p<0.00) and relationship management (p<0.05) have a significant relationships on employees performance. The findings also revealed that self-management has the highest significant influence on dependent variable of employee job performance β equal to 0.542; p=0.00 and it is followed by self-awareness β=0.2; p<0.05 and relationship management β= 0.18; p<0.05. However, social awareness has no impact towards employee job performance as it shows non-significant value of 0.94; p>0.05.

Effects of EI on Employee Job Performance
Hypothesis 1 (H1) states that there is positive relationship between self-awareness and employee job performance. Since p=0.021 is less than 0.05 thus H1 is accepted and higher self-awareness leads to higher employee job performance. Hypothesis 2 (H2) stated that there is positive relationship between self-management and employee job performance. Since p-value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 hence H2 is also accepted and higher self-management leads to higher employee job performance. Hypothesis 3 (H3) stated that there is a positive relationship between social awareness and employee job performance. Based on the coefficient table (Table

4), the third hypothesis is rejected since the p=0.941 which is more than 0.05. It can be said that there is no impact of social awareness towards employee job performance in this study. Lastly, hypothesis 4 (H4) postulates that there is a positive relationship between relationship management and employee job performance. From the findings, it shows that p=0.042 which is less than 0.05. Hence, hypothesis 4 is accepted and indicates that relationship management has a positive relationship with employee job performance.

Discussion and Conclusion
Discussion on the Findings
The main purpose of conducting this research is to determine whether there is a relationship between self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management with employee job performance. Among all four variables examined, self-management has the strongest effect on employee job performance followed by self-awareness and relationship management. The findings are consistent with previous studies conducted by Virginia, Nancy and Wlliam (2010) which found a positive significant relationship between self-awareness and employee job performance. Besides that, hypothesis 2 is accepted and the result indicated that self-management has positive effect towards employee job performance. Hence, this study supported the findings by Victoroff and Boyatzis (2012); Maria (2015) which revealed a positive relationship between self-management and employee job performance.

This study also shows that social awareness has no impact to employee job performance. Based on the past research, it is claimed that employees choose not too overly attached with their colleagues. It is because sometimes they are restricted to perform their work. As revealed by Gryn (2010), social awareness has no impact towards job performances. This study also shows that relationship management has a positive effect towards employee job performance. This finding is consistent with the previous study by Sahedur and Rabeya (2017) and Treadway et.al (2013). Lastly, it is found that self-management as the most significant dimension of EI that influences employee job performance. This finding is consistent with the previous research conducted by Rothstein (2010) who found self-management as the most significant factor that affect job performance.

Among all the dimensions of EI examined in this study, self-management is found to be the most influential one. Thus, it is proposed that this organization can conduct training courses or workshop related to EI to their employees that focus on how employees can manage their emotions. The training should not only focus on lower level employees but leaders also need to be trained on how to control their feelings and reactions towards another employee. Based on the findings, it is suggested that the organization should encourage employees to get involved in decision making process and let them know that their contributions are important to the organization. It is because the employees' role is essential for the success of the company. Furthermore, employees should be provided with day-to-day feedback and informal recognition on their performance so that they will be motivated to perform well.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research
There are several limitations in this study. Firstly, the sample used in this study is confined to employees in a selected company in the oil and gas industry in Malaysia. This has implications on generalizing the research findings to employees in other economic sectors. Thus, future

researchers may replicate this study using samples drawn from various occupations and types of work. Secondly, this study has employed a cross-sectional design in which data were collected at a single point in time. Thus, this has exposed to the weakness of not allowing the researchers to draw firm conclusion regarding the causal direction of the relationship between the four dimensions of EI and employees performance. Drawing upon this weakness, future researchers should employ a longitudinal study design to study the relationships among the variables thus ensuring the continuity of the responses. Finally, the variables used in this model only explained about 54.5% of the employee job performance variance. Therefore, future research should include other potential variables that can be test along with the model. Moreover, the understanding on how EI affects employee job performance will be more meaningful if future researchers include other potential moderator such as personality variables.

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