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The Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance Among Information Professionals

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ABSTRACT

This article explored the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Job Performance among Information Professionals in a selected organization in Malaysia. This study aimed to measure the level of EI among information professionals in public sectors and to determine the relationship between EI and job performance. This study employed a quantitative research method and has been participated in by 105 respondents working in the National Registration Department (NRD). A convenience sampling method was employed to obtain data analyzed using Smart PLS. This study showed that emotional intelligence improves job performance in NRD for information professionals. The study found a significant positive relationship between EI dimensions such as social awareness and job performance, while self-awareness and self-management were not significantly related. Practical implications, study limitations, and future research directions were also discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, employers emphasis and refer to academic qualifications as the basis for making quality assessments before prospective employees are offered jobs. Deary (2020) mentioned that intelligence test scores at age 11 are a powerful predictor of educational outcomes at age 16 and can help select people for work. Simply put, IQ test scores symbolise success ratings in most jobs. Hence, excellent job performance was assessed based on higher IQ achievement. However, an employee's outstanding performance in the workplace cannot be guaranteed through IQ performance. In addition, Bal (2020) stated that organisations prefer candidates with a success profile consisting of competencies, personal attributes, experience, and knowledge, which portrays a holistic view of success. The findings indicated that many variables besides IQ are catalysts towards good grade achievement.

Emotional Intelligence (EI), also known as Emotional Quotient, is of significant value in addition to IQ. EI is the ability to identify people's feelings and reactions and develop this talent to make the right decisions and avoid or solve problems. Tiffin and Paton (2020) defined EI as a complex concept, with two factions

of research focusing on its relationship with cognitive ability (IQ) and its impact on success in life. Many organisations have realised that to be competitive in today's competitive field of work, they need not only academic skills but also EI. EI significantly influences job attitudes, such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and employee engagement, which are essential for organisational competitiveness (Kavyashree & Anupama, 2023). Higher emotional intelligence in employees leads to easier discovery of appropriate arrangements, better judgment, and faster access to social help, reducing disappointment and depersonalisation (Kochhar & Tripathi, 2022).

Each employment sector that implements or encourages employees to develop EI skills has its strategy. For example, in the Malaysian public sector, Pillar 12 is used, which consists of 12 standards that civil servants must follow. Employee EI criteria are a part of these 12 standards to determine the well-being of the working environment, in turn, so that employees can do their jobs well. According to Elias (2011), Pillar 12 practices highly support employee performance. Based on current trends and the relevance of EI adopted in the workplace to ensure work is done well, this study explores the relationship and influence of EI on job performance among information professionals in the public sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is widely recognised as a valuable talent that enhances communication, planning, problem-solving, and employee interaction. EI allows people to understand, moderate, and motivate emotions while fostering constructive social interactions. According to Roy (2023), employees with high EI led to better outcomes for stress management, conflict resolution, and relationship satisfaction in the workplace. Similarly, Mokhtar and Krishnan (2023) found that EI positively correlates with employee performance, as it helps employees handle workplace challenges more effectively, reducing stress and burnout. Thus, implementing and developing EI in the workplace can significantly improve an employee's job performance and social capabilities.

Overview of job performance

Job performance is a set of behaviours relevant to achieving an organisation's goal where a person works (Zakaria et al., 2020). Job performance is a behaviour that is different from work outcomes and is related to success and productivity. Job performance must contribute optimally to the growth and development of the individual so that the vision, mission, and goals of the organisation can be realised. In promoting professional job performance information, problems can be identified and facts discovered, such as the fact that behaviour over time tends to be low, based on the quantity and quality of work, as well as the timeliness used in information professional work, so the impact on information professional performance is the minimum.

Emotional intelligence and job performance required in public sectors

According to Lee (2018), employees in the public sector are frequently presented with emotionally demanding jobs and obligations, making EI a crucial consideration. EI enhances job performance, team performance, and knowledge-sharing behaviour, impacting teamwork, cooperation, and trust (Koutsioumpa, 2023). The capacity to manage and regulate one's emotions, including emotional well-being, is essential for reducing burnout at work (Mehta, 2020). Employees with high EI scores have a lower rate of burnout when doing jobs (Sanchez-Gomez & Breso, 2020). According to Yusof and Zaini (2022), self-management of emotional intelligence significantly improves work performance and productivity among information professionals in the government sector in Malaysia. For instance, Singh (2019) revealed that EI and social competencies significantly predict job performance and cultural adjustment for expatriates in the ICT sector in Malaysia, with self-motivation playing a mediating role. Research by Moorthy (2023)

mentioned that EI subscales have a significant relationship with job performance in Malaysia, influenced by psychological capital, where the COVID-19 pandemic has affected employees' emotional intelligence through negative effects on their mental health, leading to poor workplace performance. EI in successful organisations, composed of interpersonal understanding, emotional expressiveness, awareness, empathy, and behavioural intentions, is crucial for building interaction and developing a corporate culture based on creativity, relationships, and self-development (Prokhorova, 2020).

Models and framework for assessing EI and job performance

In terms of EI and job performance, several dynamic theories and models endorse the idea from a social psychology perspective. These include the:

- Model of abilities of Mayer and Salovey
- Goleman's mixed model
- The mixed model of BarOn
- Goleman-Noriah Emotional Intelligence Model
- Campbell's Job Performance Model
- Murphy's Job Performance Model
- Individual Work Performance Model by Koopmans
- Self-Efficacy Theory by Bandura

This study chose to examine EI from Goleman's (1998) perspective. Two factors led to the selection of this model. First, Goleman can be called an authority in EI because he is the creator of the EI model, an assessment of individual performance in the workplace, or an EI-based performance model. Second, the Goleman dimensions (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) are fascinating and have good reliability and validity, with scores ranging from 0.69 to 0.9 (Ealias & George, 2012). However, the research completed by Noriah et al. (2006) was also included in this study, along with one extra domain that should be addressed in sustaining high EI: spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence is concerned with one's spiritual ideals, whereas maturity refers to one's ability to handle life experiences and use them as a learning tool. Hence, this study investigated the five domains of EI. The researcher chose the model because it had many elements that could justify the emotional stability issues of the Malaysian information professional.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted using survey methodology. The population consists of information professionals, namely the Information Technology (IT) Department, as a case study for research. The information professionals were chosen because their job scope was related to information management (IM) and their working environment fitted the research objectives and scope. The sampling technique used was a stratified simple random sampling using 105 information professionals. Quantitative data was collected from 25 items. All measurements were accompanied by five-point Likert scales, which started from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The data were analysed using Smart PLS, a software tool analysis of partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). F2 and Q2 analyses were also made to show the comparison and similarity of items and variables being tested. As such, predictive relevance was determined based on a Q2 analysis of each variable. The result was discussed in the findings.

STUDY FINDINGS

Respondents' demographic profiles

Of the 105 information professionals in the sample, 35.24%, or 37, were male, whereas 64.76% or 68, were female. Regarding the age of the respondents, n=1 or (0.95%) indicated they were between the ages of 21 and 30, while n=43 or (40.95%) of them were reported being between the ages of 31 and 40. Most of the respondents (n= 51 or 48.57%) were between the ages of 41 and 50, while 9.52% were over 50. In terms of position, 7.62% of the respondents were Chief or Assistant Director, 6.67% served as Assistant Director, 16.19% served as Information Technology Officer, and 66.67% served as Assistant Information Technology Officer. In comparison, only 2.86% served as Other. In terms of Service Grade, most of the respondents 49.52% were in grade FA32-FA38, 22.86% grade FT19-FA29, 16.19%, grade F41-F44, while higher grades or F48-F54 comprised 11 respondents (10.48%) and 1 respondent choose other. Besides, regarding Education Level, most respondents, or 47.62%, were in STPM/Matriculation/Diploma level, while 42.86% were at Degree level, 8.57% were at Master level, and 1 respondent was at SPM level. About 0.95% of the respondents had served for less than five years, 3.81% had served for five to ten years, 42.86% for 11-15 years, 22.86% for 16 - 20 years, and 29.52% for more than 20 years.

Perception of respondents and structured model

The respondents' perception of some elements of the level of understanding about Emotional Intelligence: The Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance Among Information Professionals can be measured in five dimensions i.e., Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Management, and Spiritual Intelligence. and Job Performance. The following subsections discuss the tests used to assess the validity of the structural model for this study. The validity of the structural model is assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2) and path coefficient.

Coefficient of determination (R2)

The R2 value indicates the amount of variance in dependent variables that is explained by the independent variables. Thus, a more significant R-value increases the predictive ability of the structural model. In this study, the SmartPLS algorithm function is used to obtain the R2 values, while the SmartPLS bootstrapping function is used to generate the t-statistics values. For this study, bootstrapping generated 500 samples from 105 cases. The result of the structural model is presented in Fig. 1.

Path coefficients

Each path connecting six latent variables within the structural model represented a hypothesis. Using the SmartPLS algorithm output, the relationships between independent and dependent variables were examined. Table 1 lists all hypothesised paths' total mean score, standard deviation, original sample (O), observed t-statistics, and significance level. Using the results from the path assessment, the acceptance or rejection of the proposed hypotheses was determined.

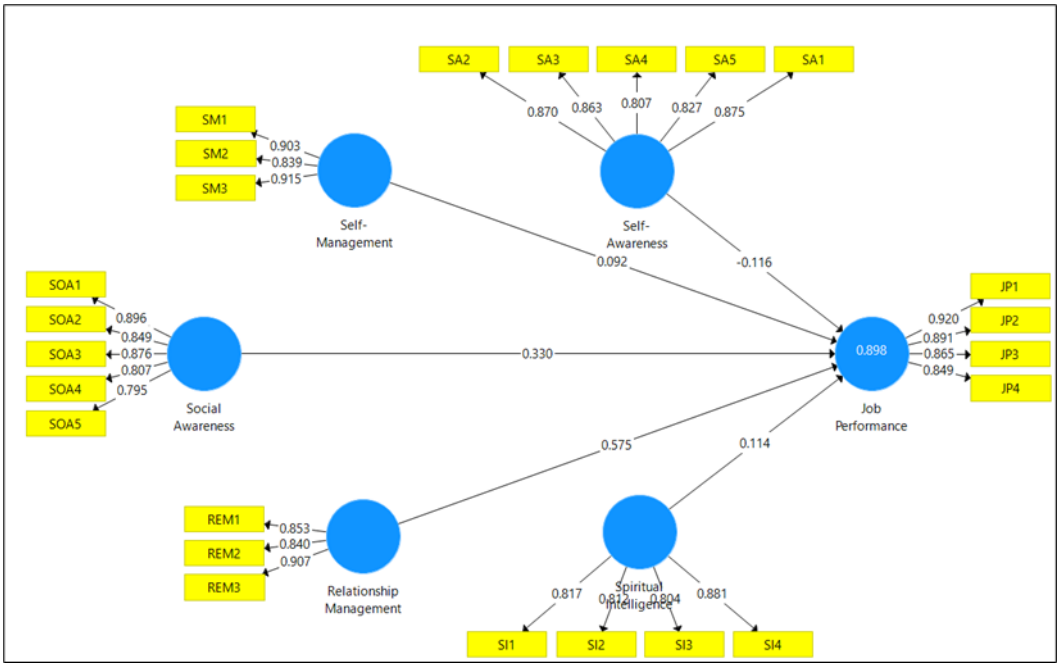

Figure 1 Results of structural model
(Source: Ringle et al., 2015)

Table 1 Path coefficients

	Mean	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Relationship Management	3.94	0.803	0.575	8.180	0.000
Self-Awareness	3.79	0.807	-0.116	2.880	0.000
Self-Management	4.24	0.752	0.092	0.744	0.457
Social Awareness	4.14	0.694	0.330	4.198	0.000
Spiritual Intelligence	4.26	0.742	0.114	2.333	0.020

Overall, the total mean score value for variables among information professionals was high. These findings explained that respondents strongly agree with the level of EI among information professionals in public sectors. Assessment of the path coefficient (refer to Table 2) showed that all proposed hypotheses were supported and those were not supported. From the analysis, supported hypotheses were significant, at least at 0.05, expected sign directions (i.e., positive), and unsupported hypotheses had insignificant relations. The path coefficient of the study consisted of a path coefficient value (β) ranging from -0.116 to 0.575. Based on the analysis, it showed that only two hypotheses were not supported, which were Self-Awareness ($t = 2.880$, $p < 0.05$) and Self-Management ($t = 0.744$, $p > 0.05$). On the other hand, other hypotheses, which were Relationship Management ($t = 8.180$, $p < 0.05$), Social Awareness ($t = 4.198$, $p < 0.05$), and Spiritual Intelligence ($t = 2.333$, $p < 0.05$), are supported.

Table 2 Hypothesis table

Hypothesis Statements		Result
H1	There is a positive significant relationship between self-awareness and job performance.	Not Supported
H2	There is a positive significant relationship between self-management and job performance.	Not Supported
H3	There is a positive significant relationship between social awareness and job performance.	Supported
H4	There is a positive significant relationship between relationship management and job performance.	Supported
H5	There is a positive significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and job performance.	Supported

DISCUSSION

This study's result indicated no relationship between self-awareness and job performance among information professionals. Information professionals participating in the survey disagreed that although working in the public sector, they were not required to be aware of the appropriate emotions when dealing with others. Although different situations require them to exhibit different emotions to deliver high-quality services, information professionals do not consider self-awareness to be assertive and positive, manage their emotions well, remain calm, and make effective decisions that can add to benefit their organisation. Similarly, self-management was not significantly related to job performance among information professionals. Most respondents in this study did not accept that self-management would affect job performance. This may occur because of the most significant disadvantage of self-management, which was the time and energy needed to promote the transition. Information professionals are used to operating by the chain of command; it takes more than a workshop or application to change things.

In contrast, the relationship between the social awareness and job performance variables was proved. Perhaps information professionals participating in the survey were ready to assist the users as stated in their client charter (Piagam Pelanggan). Fourth, there was a relationship between relationship management and job performance among information professionals. Besides, this variable had the highest mean of the EI competency. This could happen because of the survey participants' propensity to develop and link interpersonal relationships. This study also proved the relationship between spiritual intelligence and job performance variables. Respondents accepted spiritual intelligence, and this occurred because information professionals believed in an individual's ability to appreciate religious values in facing everyday challenges. Based on a discussion of the relationship between all five independent variables of EI and the job performance variable explicitly showed a strong relationship among them. The respondents positively agreed with the importance of EI boosting their job performance and assisting them in their daily working routine. Alongside the debate discussed earlier, the level of EI among information professionals in public sectors was high, which confirmed the first research question.

CONCLUSION

EI is vital to boost job performance and, in turn, to help people remain calm and think critically to develop a healthy working spirit and accomplish goals. This study shows that emotional intelligence improves job performance in NRD for information professionals. The results showed a strong correlation between emotional intelligence and the job performance of information professionals. They perform better when they have better emotional control and can manage their behaviour to fit in with the workplace. The study's results have confirmed that the method by which information professionals use their emotional intelligence abilities significantly impacts their performance and behaviours. The investigation's results have several ramifications. First, NRD high management can now practically incorporate emotional intelligence evaluation tools in the member recruitment and selection processes, especially in the IT Dept. Second, because emotional intelligence and job performance are positively correlated, related employees are advised to undergo emotional intelligence training to apply some practical techniques to enhance and advance their job performance in information professionals' contexts. To improve their work performance at their place of employment, it is advisable to implement emotional intelligence training programs.

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Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study
This research paper contributes to the field of Library and Information Management.

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