



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND
DECISION MAKING AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF UNIMAS**

ISAAC TAN MING ERN

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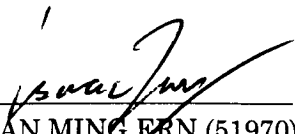
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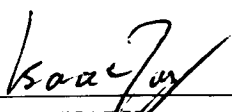
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MAKING AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF UNIMAS**

ISAAC TAN MING ERN

This project is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Science
with Honours
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(2019)

The project entitled 'Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Decision Making among Undergraduates of UNIMAS' was prepared by Isaac Tan Ming Ern and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Science with Honours (Cognitive Science).

Received for examination by:



(DR NOREHAN ZULKIPLY)

Date:

21 JAN 2019

Grade A

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ABSTRACT

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND DECISION MAKING AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF UNIMAS

Emotion may serve as a cognitive guide to assist decision making. The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and its related constructs with decision making among undergraduates of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). This study is a quantitative study that utilizes questionnaires adapted from Greene (2014) for emotional intelligence and its constructs and MindTools (2018) for decision making. Using stratified sampling, 100 male and 100 female respondents were gathered for this study. Pearson correlation was used to test the relationship between emotional intelligence and its constructs with decision making. The study asserts that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and decision making among undergraduates. The constructs of emotional intelligence, self-management and social awareness indicate a significant relationship exists with decision making. However in terms of self-awareness and relationship management, results indicate no significant relationship with decision making. Using Independent T-test, there are no gender differences in terms of emotional intelligence and also decision making among undergraduates. It is hoped that this study will be beneficial to related stakeholders and future research.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Decision Making, Undergraduates

ABSTRAK

HUBUNG KAIT ANTARA KEPINTARAN EMOSI DAN PEMBUATAN KEPUTUSAN DALAM KALANGAN SISWA UNIMAS

Emosi boleh berfungsi sebagai panduan kognitif untuk membantu dalam pembuatan keputusan. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji hubung kait antara kepintaran emosi bersama komponennya dengan pembuatan keputusan dalam kalangan siswa Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Kajian ini adalah kajian kuantitatif yang menggunakan soal selidik yang diadaptasi daripada Greene (2014) untuk kepintaran emosi bersama komponennya dan MindTools (2018) untuk pembuatan keputusan. Dengan menggunakan persampelan berstrata, 100 responden lelaki dan 100 responden wanita telah dikumpulkan untuk kajian ini. Ujian 'Pearson Correlation' digunakan untuk menguji hubung kait antara kepintaran emosi bersama komponennya dengan pembuatan keputusan. Kajian ini menegaskan bahawa terdapat hubung kait yang signifikan antara kepintaran emosi dan pembuatan keputusan dalam kalangan siswa. Komponen-komponen kepintaran emosi, iaitu pengurusan diri dan kesedaran sosial menunjukkan hubung kait yang signifikan dengan pembuatan keputusan. Dari segi kesedaran diri dan pengurusan hubungan pula, tiada hubung kait yang signifikan dengan pembuatan keputusan. Dengan menggunakan 'Independent T-test', dapatan kajian menunjukkan tiada perbezaan antara jantina dari segi kepintaran emosi dan juga pembuatan keputusan dalam kalangan siswa. Kajian ini diharapkan dapat memberi manfaat kepada pihak-pihak yang berkaitan dan kajian masa depan.

Kata kunci: Kepintaran Emosi, Pembuatan Keputusan, Siswa

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, problem statement, objectives, research questions, conceptual framework, definition of terms and followed by the significance of the study. The rationale of this study is laid out here.

1.2 Background of the Study

The field of emotional intelligence is no stranger in the research world and has established relationships with variables like personality, stress, academic tasks and achievement, conflict and leadership (Mehta & Singh, 2013). However, a few studies have contributed to how emotional intelligence and its associated components can be related to decision making. Emotional intelligence as a term was asserted when people began realizing that having a high Intelligence Quotient (IQ) does not guarantee success and failing is still bound to happen.

Mayer and Salovey (1997) asserted emotional intelligence as “the ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotions, the ability to access and generate feelings that facilitate thought, the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge, and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth”. This implies that emotional information can be used to guide one’s thoughts and action. In today’s world of various demands, having proper thoughts and actions are more so relevant. This relates to choosing among alternatives which is essentially decision making (Goldstein, 2011). Hence, emotional intelligence could influence decision making. Cherniss and Adler (2000) coined emotional intelligence as the capability to accurately understand and identify one’s own

emotional reactions and those of others. It also involves the capability to regulate one's emotions and use it for good decision-making, acting effectively. Furthermore, people do behave regularly in ways which ignore the optimum way of responding based on probabilities. These circumstances suggest that emotion can influence decisions because the individuals "feel" better if they take risks in gambling and win or just a sense of more control when on ground compared to flying although statistics prove it to be more dangerous (Goldstein, 2011).

Fallahzadeh (2011) states that emotional intelligence also incorporates the vital aspects of an individual's interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, adaptability, moods and stress management skills, all of which have a critical influence on the academic performance of students. Decision-making can utilize these students' self-management skills to build emotional control from internal and external factors (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011). With the emotional intelligence skill of social awareness, decision makers are able to judge the effects of the decisions they made (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 2000). Scott and Bruce (1995) suggested that students with good emotional intelligence were better at decision making. Organizations and individuals can take advantage from the utilization and development of behaviors associated with emotional intelligence. The practical application of emotional intelligence skills may improve individual and group decisions and outcomes (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011).

1.3 Problem Statement

Previous research conducted on emotional intelligence suggested that emotional intelligence plays a role in various contexts such as workplace and its relation to other cognitive tasks such as problem solving and academic tasks (Nelson & Low, 2003). Emotions may influence people's actions while decision making, a cognitive task practically determines

what people do (actions) and how they react. Thus, emotion may serve as a cognitive guide to assist decision making.

Past studies on the relationship between emotional intelligence and decision making were mostly done on leaders and managers (Moghadam, Tehrani & Amin, 2011). Therefore, this research would focus on undergraduates instead as compared to leaders and managers due to their nature of commitments such as having to cope with various demands like student priorities, hecticness and the future path to be embarked on. Decisions are made to meet these demands of academic, social and financial circumstances and it influences the undergraduates themselves whether they like it or not. Hence, the purpose of this research is to identify if a significant relationship exists between emotional intelligence and decision making among undergraduates.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General objective

- To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and decision making among undergraduates of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).

1.4.2 Specific objectives

1. To examine the relationship between self-awareness and decision making among undergraduates.
2. To examine the relationship between self-management and decision making among undergraduates.
3. To examine the relationship between social awareness and decision making among undergraduates.

4. To examine the relationship between relationship management and decision making among undergraduates.
5. To examine the differences between male and female undergraduates in terms of emotional intelligence.
6. To examine the differences between male and female undergraduates in terms of decision making.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions of this study are derived from the research objectives.

1. Is there any significant relationship between emotional intelligence and decision making among undergraduates?
2. Is there any significant relationship between self-awareness and decision making among undergraduates?
3. Is there any significant relationship between self-management and decision making among undergraduates?
4. Is there any significant relationship between social awareness and decision making among undergraduates?
5. Is there any significant relationship between relationship management and decision making among undergraduates?
6. Is there any significant difference between male and female undergraduates in terms of emotional intelligence?
7. Is there any significant difference between male and female undergraduates in terms of decision making?

1.6 Conceptual Framework

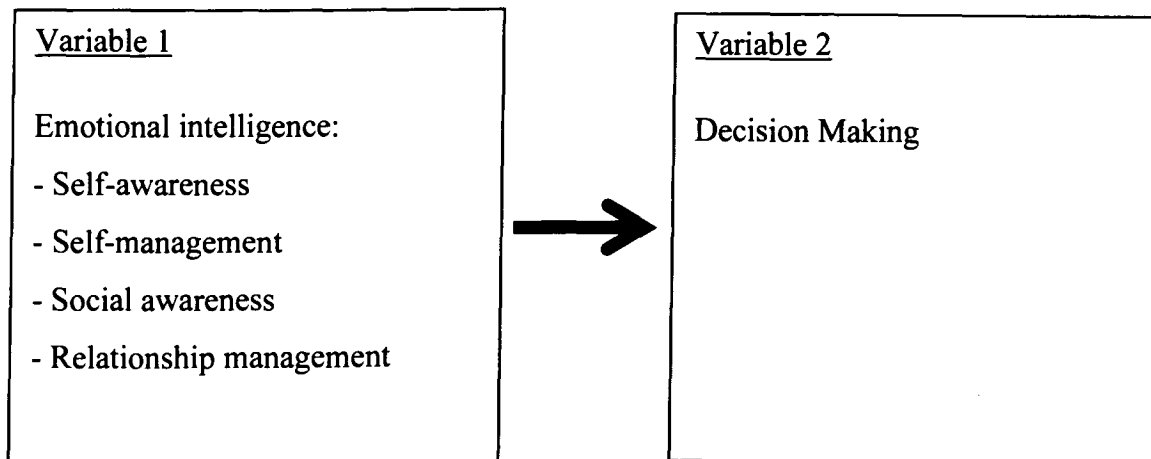


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of study

1.7 Definition of Terms

Emotional intelligence

Conceptual definition: Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize our own feelings and others for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationship (Goleman, 1995).

Operational definition: In the present study, participants' emotional intelligence was measured using inventory results obtained from emotional intelligence (components) scale questions adapted from Goleman's emotional intelligence model.

Decision making

Conceptual definition: Decision making is about purposefully picking an option from two or more options to reach a specific goal, objective or outcome under conditions of uncertainty, in a proactive manner, with the least amount of risk (Cervone, 2005).

Operational definition: In the present study, participants' decision making was measured using inventory results obtained from decision making scale questions adapted from Mind Tools (2018).

1.8 Significance of the Study

The intended significance of this study is to depict the relationship between emotional intelligence and decision making among undergraduates. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the understanding of emotional intelligence and its influence on decision making especially for undergraduates. This study would allow the undergraduates to reevaluate themselves and improve their emotional state to make decisions when uncertainty exists in the forever evolving environment of university. With respect to that, there will be an increase of awareness and this study provides a valuable reference for others to reflect and improve their emotional intelligence in accordance to making better decisions.

1.9 Summary

The rationale and background of this study was clarified in this chapter. Important elements necessary in conducting this study were defined and identified.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide several relevant studies from the researcher's selected area of study that will act as secondary sources for this research. It traces the intellectual progression of the field and will explore the nature and background of this research as it introduces key concepts and basic theoretical and methodological ideas about the coming of this research. As the chapter progresses, a better understanding and purpose of this research about the relationship between emotional intelligence and decision making among undergraduates is to be achieved. This chapter is divided into two sections; related research and theories and models that comprise of emotional intelligence, decision making and emotional intelligence and decision making.

2.2 Related Research

Miranda (2016) did a study and showed there was a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and decision making among military police officers. The study used the Emotional Judgment Inventory (EJI) with its dimensions; being aware of emotions, identifying one's emotions, identifying other's emotions, managing one's emotions, managing other's emotions, expressing emotions and using emotions in problem solving (Bar-On, Maree, & Elias as cited in Miranda, 2016) to measure responses on a seven-point Likert-type scale. The findings from 101 officers stated that officers who have high emotional intelligence will perform better in conflict situations and reduce potential violence and be able to put aside emotions created in violable situations to make decisions that reduce conflict leading to positive outcomes. It is mentioned that emotional intelligence has influence over

decision making and an important skill that helps develop understanding leading to a better relationship with the community.

Besides that, Sumathy, Madhavi and Felix (2015) suggested that there is a link between the level of emotional intelligence and decision making. The study was about exploring the influences of emotional intelligence on leadership and decision making skills of the leader. From the 150 respondents, results showed that emotional intelligence has a higher influence in transactional leader's decision making compared to transformational leader's decision making. It further indicated that the dimension of empathy (social awareness) influence both type of leaders the most.

Barzegar, Afzal, Maleki and Koochakyazdi (2013) examined the association between emotional intelligence and decision making quality in 30 hospital managers. A significant correlation between the emotional intelligence and the quality of decision making was found ($r = 0.40$, $P < 0.001$). Multivariate regression analysis showed that emotional intelligence influences solution finding of the hospital managers ($\beta = 0.72$, $P < 0.001$). Results indicated that emotional intelligence does influence quality of decision making.

Furthermore, Moghadam, Tehrani and Amin (2011) did a study on the relationship between emotional intelligence and management decision making styles of 55 Iranian managers from the oil industry. Results asserted that there were negative meaningful relationship between emotional intelligence with rational and avoidant decision making styles while a positive meaningful relationship between emotional intelligence with intuitive decision making style. There was no meaningful relationship between emotional intelligence with both dependent and spontaneous decision making style. The study indicated that emotional intelligence does lead to a wide variety of styles in managerial decision making. Similarly, Rahgozar, Piran, Afshangian and Yousefi (2012) revealed that a relationship exists

between emotional intelligence and decision making styles among school principals as well. The study suggested that there was a meaningful correlation between self-motivation, self-control and social awareness with decision making styles while there was no meaningful relationship between social skills and self-awareness with decision making styles.

Hess and Bacigalupo (2011) did a study titled 'Enhancing decisions and decision-making processes through the application of emotional intelligence skills'. By observations and using a set of questions to assist decision makers, this practical application of emotional intelligence skills and behaviours can improve the outcome of a decision and the processes related to it in terms of quality and effectiveness. Assessing potential emotional outcomes and reactions of decisions may encourage decision makers to predict the sentiment of those affected by decisions, thus increasing the probability of a more positive decision outcome. Likewise, Hess and Bacigalupo (2013) did another similar study and added that decisions worth making often generate conflict, and the capability to manage the conflict requires emotional intelligence which may determine the success of the decision making process.

Next, Emmerling and Cherniss (2003) conveyed that individuals with stronger emotional intelligence are more capable to relate their professional interests and values with their ideal careers. Foreseeing and being emotionally prepared for the outcomes of various career options were more likely to happen to them. During this process, emotions have the impact for the perception of risk associated to specific career options, the amount and kind of self-exploration to be engaged in, and how information linked to career choice is processed.

In the dimension of emotional intelligence related to the objective of this study that links it with decision making, a study to examine whether students of different gender have different emotional intelligence was carried out by Meshkat and Nejati (2017). The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory was distributed to 455 undergraduates majoring in English.

Findings suggested that difference between genders in emotional intelligence was not significant though females tend to score higher in the self-awareness, self-regard, empathy and interpersonal relationship component.

Missri (2008) did a study to evaluate the differences between male and female in decision making for foreign policy. The study focused on the differences in biases in decision making, the differences between satisficing and maximizing approaches by both genders, the differences between strategy selection, and the difference between holistic and non-holistic decision making by both genders. Findings suggested that both genders have similarities and differences in various aspects of the decision making but no significant difference exists between genders in decision making.

2.3 Theories and Models

2.3.1 Emotional Intelligence

All sorts of programs designed to develop emotional intelligence in individuals have been implemented in numerous settings such as organisations, universities and schools (Mehta & Singh, 2013). Generally, emotional intelligence is referred to as the capability to recognize and regulate emotions in ourselves and others (Goleman, 2001). Goleman (1995) stated that “IQ alone is no more the measure for success; it only contributes for 20%, and the rest goes for Emotional and Social Intelligences, and luck”. Therefore, it would seem that emotional intelligence gives an individual a competitive edge to succeed. Recognizing them would prove to be useful. Nelson and Low (2003, p.12) conveyed that “emotional intelligence is the single most important variable in personal achievement, career success, leadership and life satisfaction”.

Crow and Crow (1964) revealed that an “emotion is an affective experience that accompanies generalized inner adjustment of mental and psychological stirred up states in an individual and expresses itself in his or her overt behavior”. Emotions seem to be a motivator or acts as a stimulus for an individual to carry out an action in a certain way. On the other hand, intelligence is a global concept involving an individual’s ability to act purposefully, think rationally, and deal effectively with the environment (Wechsler, 1958). Therefore, emotional intelligence is the capability to perceive emotions, access and integrate emotions to assist thoughts, understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions to be able to promote emotional, intellectual and personal growth which suggests that emotional intelligence emphasizes on skills like building and maintaining human relationships, an important aspect of life (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

Dulewicz and Higgs (2000) explained the constructs of emotional intelligence with three definitions; having the knowledge of what you are feeling and being able to handle it without it overpowering you, being able to motivate yourself to complete jobs, be creative and performing at your highest level, and sensing the feelings of others and handling relationships effectively. Similarly, Goleman (1998) stated that emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize our own feelings and others, motivate ourselves, and manage emotions in ourselves and in our relationships well. Goleman’s model of emotional intelligence was employed in this study and it underlies four major constructs of emotional intelligence:

1. Self-awareness:

Knowing one’s emotions and recognizing the impact while using gut feelings to guide decisions.

2. Self-management:

Managing, controlling one’s emotions, impulses and adapting to evolving circumstances.

3. Social awareness:

Sensing, understanding and reacting to other’s emotions, needs and concerns while comprehending social networks.

4. Relationship management:

Influencing, inspiring and developing others while managing conflict (inducing desirable responses in others).

A set of competencies is included within these constructs and Goleman opined that they are not innate talents but rather learned capabilities that can be worked on and developed. Below is Goleman’s conceptual model of emotional intelligence with its involved competencies.

	SELF	OTHER
	Personal Competence	Social Competence
RECOGNITION	<u>Self- Awareness</u> Emotional Self- Awareness Accurate Self- Assessment Self- Confidence	<u>Social Awareness</u> Empathy Service Orientation Organizational Awareness
REGULATION	<u>Self- Management</u> Self- Control Trustworthiness Conscientiousness Adaptability Achievement Drive Initiative	<u>Relationship Management</u> Developing Others Influence Communication Conflict Management Leadership Change Catalyst Building Bonds