



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**THE ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY AMONG UNDERGRADUATES:
THE ROLE OF GENDER, CGPA AND TRAIT EMOTIONAL
INTELLIGENCE**

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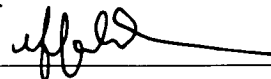
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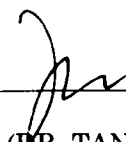


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**THE ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY AMONG UNDERGRADUATES:
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IFFAH ADLINA BINTI IBRAHIM

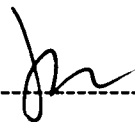
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The project entitled 'The Academic Self-Efficacy Among Undergraduates: The Role of Gender, CGPA and Trait Emotional Intelligence' was prepared by Iffah Adlina binti Ibrahim and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Science with Honours (Cognitive Science).

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<p>Grade</p> <p>A -</p>

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“Believe in yourself and all that you are. Know that there is something inside you that is greater than any obstacle”

– Christian D. Larson

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ABSTRACT

Academic self-efficacy is important for students which will help them to perform better in studies. This study aims to explore the level of academic self-efficacy among UNIMAS undergraduates based on gender, CGPA and trait emotional intelligence. The samples of study involved are 50 male and 50 female participants which consists of final year students from Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development of different courses that includes Human Resource, Cognitive Science and Counselling. This study is a quantitative study that utilizes questionnaires adopted from a study which measure the academic self-efficacy in terms of gender and academic year experience of undergraduates by Sachitra and Bandara (2017) and The Short Form (TEIQue-SF) Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire was developed by Petrides (2009). The results of the study have shown that female students have higher academic self-efficacy compared to male students. In addition, students who obtain a higher CGPA also have higher self-efficacy. There was also a small positive correlation between trait emotional intelligence and academic self-efficacy.

Keywords: academic self-efficacy, gender, CGPA, trait emotional intelligence

ABSTRAK

Academic self-efficacy adalah penting bagi pelajar untuk membantu mereka mendapatkan prestasi yang lebih cemerlang dari segi akademik. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji tahap academic self-efficacy dalam kalangan pelajar UNIMAS berdasarkan jantina, PNGK dan trait emotional intelligence. Sampel kajian yang terlibat adalah 50 pelajar lelaki dan 50 pelajar perempuan yang terdiri daripada pelajar tahun akhir Fakulti Sains Kognitif dan Pembangunan Manusia daripada kursus yang berbeza iaitu Pembangunan Sumber Manusia, Sains Kognitif dan Kaunseling. Kajian ini merupakan kajian kuantitatif yang menggunakan soal selidik yang telah diambil daripada satu kajian lepas yang mengukur tentang academic self-efficacy dari segi jantina dan tahun pengajian oleh Sachitra dan Bandara (2017). Seterusnya, borang soal selidik mengenai trait emotional intelligence pula telah dikeluarkan oleh Petrides (2009) yang dikenali sebagai TEIQue-SF. Hasil kajian telah menunjukkan bahawa pelajar perempuan mempunyai academic self-efficacy yang lebih tinggi berbanding pelajar lelaki. Selain itu, pelajar yang memperoleh PNGK yang lebih tinggi juga mempunyai academic self-efficacy yang lebih tinggi. Terdapat juga korelasi positif yang kecil antara trait emotional intelligence dan academic self-efficacy.

Keywords: academic self-efficacy, jantina, PNGK, trait emotional intelligence

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter includes the background of the study, the problem statements, the objectives and the hypothesis as well as the research questions. Additionally, the conceptual framework, the definition of terms used throughout this study, the significance of the study and the limitations of the study also discussed in this chapter.

Background of Study

Self-efficacy is often attributed to variables like self-trust or self-belief, self-esteem and self-motivation or optimism in doing something. People's trust in their own ability to achieve their objectives or goals which will influence their lives is also defined as self-efficacy. How a person feels, reflect and encourage themselves to achieve a goal is known as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994). High self-efficacy is achieved when a student is assured in their capability to handle a task, manage and organize their own problems or task achievement. The construction of self-efficacy helps to explain the assumption that individuals' behaviour is not always predicted from their ability to perform certain task. Therefore, how a person's confident and believe that they will perform is more important (Kevin, 2008). Meanwhile, academic self-efficacy is the beliefs of an individual whether they managed to complete a specific academic task successfully or achieve a specific academic objective. In addition, emotional intelligence that can be defined as the ability to evaluate, regulate and use of emotions was found out to be linked with the academic self - efficacy including academic performance (Hen & Goroshit, 2014).

Higher academic self-efficacy with a strong positive self-concept will guide the students to get inspired with some challenging academic goals, feeling less worried or tense, having fun in their academic work, strive in difficult tasks and most importantly having a better feeling about themselves as a human being and as a student (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). Previous research into gender differences in self-efficacy have shown that male students had higher self-efficacy in mathematics, computer sciences and social sciences. Meanwhile, females have a higher efficiency in language art than males (Huang, 2013). This is because the gender differences in academic self-efficacy is different according to age. For instance, past research has shown that the highest effect value is shown for participants aged over 23 years old (Huang, 2013).

Understanding the emotion of others, expressing and recognizing our own emotions is known as emotional intelligence (EI). The difference among individuals in regulation, perception and utilizing the emotional information could be found in the structure of emotional intelligence. According to the simplistic view of Daniel Goleman (1995), EI is important because it might have incremental validity beyond cognitive intelligence and personality (Neubauer & Freudenthaler, 2005). EI-dedicated research comprised of two different perspectives which is the Ability Emotional Intelligence and Trait Emotional Intelligence. The ability EI model as proposed by Mayer & Salovey (1997), have four dimensions of emotions consists of identification, utilization, understanding and regulation (Mouton, Hansenne, Delcour, & Cloes, 2013).

Therefore, ability EI is evaluated through the intelligence-like assessment. Alternatively, the trait models proposed by Petrides & Furnham (2001) is a multifaceted structure comprising 13 to 15 emotional behavioural personality considering on how an individual deal with difficulties and pressures. Thus, the trait EI is measured using the personality-like questionnaires. In addition, the Bar-On's Mixed Model (1997) does not

completely refer EI to emotion or intelligence. It is a group of personality characteristics that can predict the success in professional or daily domains. Bar-On analysed the characteristics of personality which should determine the success of life beyond cognitive intelligence.

There are five broad dimensions which consists of intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability, stress management and lastly general mood (Neubauer & Freudenthaler, 2005).

As recorded in the previous studies, students with high self-efficacy obtain higher academic performance and less emotional stress, better health and better adaptability to the higher education (Sachitra & Bandara, 2017). Past research has also shown that emotional intelligence and well-being are clearly associated with self-efficacy (Mouton, Hansenne, Delcour, & Cloes, 2013). During university education, students constantly set their own goals and at the same time facing some challenges to complete their professions effectively. Thus, students should be aware of their own emotions and academic self-efficacy to succeed in studies.

Problem Statement

University students are now facing a learning environment which requires them to have higher self-reliance, determination and better self-regulation. Unfortunately, this learning environment transforms higher education into a stressful and unemotional experience for the undergraduates (Brinkworth, McCann, Matthews, & Nordstrom, 2008). There is extensive proof that high stress lead to unwanted results, which leads to inefficient learning and poor academic performance (Aboalshamat, Hou, & Strodl, 2015). Self-efficacy beliefs are strongly linked to the level of achievement of an individual and ought to be particularly relevant in improving cognitive problem-solving strategies and lessen the withdrawal strategies (Sachitra & Bandara, 2017). As indicated further in the literature

review, the findings have been inconsistent although there has been extensive research on gender differences in academic self-efficacy (Huang, 2013).

Additionally, the essence of the issue is that there is no strong evidence whether performing well in academic improves the student's emotional intelligence or whether positive self-efficacy lead to better academic performance (Macroveli & Sanchez-Ruiz, 2011). There are contradictions on past research and limited number of studies in these areas especially among Malaysian students. Besides, there's no research that has really focused on the relationship between gender, CGPA or trait emotional intelligence on academic self-efficacy. Further research is needed to bridge the gap and in order to understand the relationship of gender, CGPA or trait emotional intelligence on the academic self-efficacy.

Objectives of the Study

Main objective

To determine the relationship between **gender, CGPA, trait emotional intelligence** on **academic self-efficacy** among FCSHD undergraduates in UNIMAS.

Specific objectives

- i. To investigate any significant difference in academic self-efficacy based on gender.
- ii. To investigate any significant difference in academic self-efficacy based on student's CGPA.
- iii. To investigate the relationship between academic self-efficacy and trait emotional intelligence among the students.

Research Questions

1. Is there any significant difference between academic self-efficacy based on gender?
2. Is there any significant difference between academic self-efficacy based on student's CGPA?
3. Is there any significant relationship between academic self-efficacy of the undergraduates and the trait emotional intelligence?

Conceptual Framework

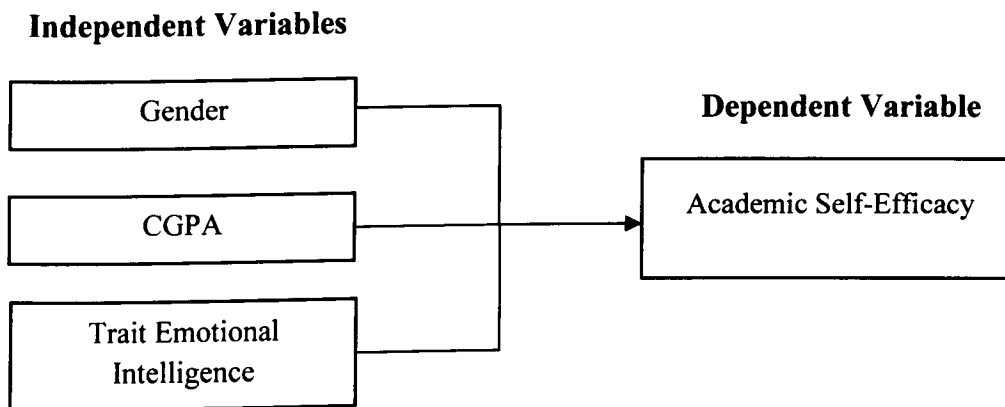


Figure 1. The conceptual framework of the study.

Figure 1 shown above is the conceptual framework of this study. The independent variables of the study are the gender, CGPA and the Trait Emotional Intelligence meanwhile the dependent variable is the academic self-efficacy. The framework shows the relationships between the demographic factors and the trait emotional intelligence towards the academic self-efficacy. Thus, this research study is set out to investigate the relationship between the gender, CGPA and trait emotional intelligence on the academic self-efficacy among undergraduates of Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development.

Definition of Terms

The conceptual and operational definitions of the terms are described as follows:

Self-efficacy

Conceptual: A personal judgement on how well a person could take some actions to deal with prospective situations. It determines whether and individual can exhibit the coping behavior and how long an effort will be made in the face of discrimination (Bandura, 2018)

Operational: A student's belief in their ability and capacity to deal with life's challenges. These beliefs are the determinants on how they will think, behave and feel in a situation. This study will be focusing on the academic self-efficacy of the students and measured using the academic self-efficacy questionnaire.

Academic self-efficacy

Conceptual: Academic self- efficacy refers to the verdict of a person that they can achieve successfully in a given academic area at a given level (Kevin, 2008).

Operational: The sense of competence and trust of the FSCHD students in the performance of academic work. In this study, the level of the academic self-efficacy of the students will be measured by using the Academic Self-Efficacy Questionnaire which consists of 20 items regarding to the academic preference.

Trait Emotional Intelligence

Conceptual: The trait emotional intelligence is the sequence of emotional self-perceptions which is located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies and measured by the trait emotional intelligence questionnaires (Pita, Petrides, & Kokkinaki, 2007).

Operational: In this study, the trait EI of the students will be examined by using the Short Form (TEIQue-SF) Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire which consists of 30 items that comprises two items from each of 15 facets of the TEIQue.

Limitations of the Study

This research study has some limitations resulting from the methodological and research constraints. This study is focusing on the student's academic self-efficacy and the trait emotional intelligence but not on their self-regulated learning strategies, psychological or mental aspect of learning. Other than that, the result achieved might not be able to generalize the entire population of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak since the research is focusing on the population of Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development students only. Hence, the findings may be different when it is carried out on other students from other faculties in UNIMAS due to the differences in content of academic syllabus, educational background, and lifestyles.

Significance of the Study

From this study, students will get to know their own level of academic self-efficacy and the trait emotional intelligence on how it would impact them. Students should be aware of their own emotions as well as their academic self-efficacy which will help them to succeed in studies and future. Academic self-efficacy of the students is important because the results from the research may influence the educational support services in the student retention which is the process of ensuring the student's graduation in the university and assisting universities to establish more effective guidance as well as implementing early consultation practices. The findings of this study can also be used as a reference for future researchers. Since there are not many research done in this area, future researchers who wish to replicate this study could use the framework implemented in this study.

Summary

To summarize, this study aims to investigate and measure the academic self-efficacy of the university students based on gender, CGPA and trait emotional intelligence. The reviews of past research will be further discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides the discussions on the previous studies done by the other researchers which is related to this field of study. All information from the past research are discussed and cited in this study.

Social Cognitive Theory on Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is an individual's belief to achieve their goals or objectives successfully. Generally, people will only attempt the things or challenges that they believe they could attain and rarely do the things that will predict to fail. However, people with high self-efficacy will set their own goals and commit themselves in sustaining their efforts to remain successful (Brown, Malouff, & Schutte, 2013). They managed to control the difficult and challenging situations with their high confident level and certainly reduced the stress level. On the contrary, individuals with low self-efficacy usually uncertain with their capability to succeed in challenging tasks and they tend to give up easily and lose faith which would lead to high level of stress and the risk of depression (Bandura, 1994).

A study have found that the self-efficacy theory constructs consists of four main factors which is by mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and lastly the somatic and emotional states (Brown, Malouff, & Schutte, 2013). Mastery experience is the most efficient way in creating a high sense of efficacy because people tend to believe that they can achieve new things if it is the same to what they have already achieved well before (Bandura, 1994). Practicing and surviving the new obstacles could guide them to became stronger in challenges.

The second factor is vicarious experience, which influences the self-efficacy by observing the success and failures of social models. For instance, people seeing someone like themselves achieving or failing which will increase or detract the self-efficacy. In academic settings, this can be seen through the students who observed their teachers as a role model on doing a task and applied that in their lives. The more frequent a person is observing another, the higher the influence on the belief that an individual could also achieve (Brown, Malouff, & Schutte, 2013).

The third factor affecting the self-efficacy when people are convinced verbally that they could accomplish a task is known as verbal or social persuasion. Encouraging someone to think that they can perform a task will increase their trust in doing something and increase their self-efficacy. Conversely, people tend to give up and have lower self-efficacy if they are being persuaded with undesirable vibes around them (Bandura, 1994).

The somatic (physical) and emotional states are the fourth factor that people rely partially on when judging their abilities. Stress or anxiety will affect self-efficacy negatively and will lead to poor performance that causes failure. Meanwhile, pleasurable emotional states will enhance the self-efficacy and support the engagement in one's behaviour (Brown, Malouff, & Schutte, 2013). In conclusion, all the factors that have been mentioned above really influenced the self-efficacy as well as the behaviour of a person.

Academic Self- Efficacy

In academic settings, self-efficacy is the major role to an individual success because it will affect their ability and the actions that they will perform in a task. Academic self-efficacy is an individual's beliefs on how well they could accomplish an academic work or adapt with the academic performance (Sharma & Nasa, 2014). According to Bandura (1977), academic self-efficacy is grounded in the self-efficacy theory which stated that the task's level of difficulty causes variations in academic self-efficacy. Few individuals believed that they are most effectual on challenging tasks whereas others favour easier tasks (Sharma & Nasa, 2014).

The academic self-efficacy affects learning and motivation among students. Therefore, it would be useful in the student's mental-learning efforts. Thus, different factors play an important role in improving the academic self-efficacy (Satici & Can, 2016). Family, friends, school and the influence of academic transitions is very important in shaping the effectiveness of academic-self efficacy. In addition, the role of teachers will also increase the student's academic self-efficacy (Schunk & Pajares, 2001). In addition, academic self-efficacy also benefits students in the social, emotional or academic aspects of being a positive individual.

Besides, academic self-efficacy also enhances the student's mental effort to learn. Students with a strong academic self-efficacy will not give up easily and manage to attempt and overcome the academic tasks allocated to them. Moreover, when comparing students of lower with higher academic self-efficacy, the students with higher academic self-efficacy study more effectively and use efficient learning strategies to manage challenging academic tasks (Satici & Can, 2016).

Trait Emotional Intelligence

The idea of emotional intelligence (EI/EQ) can be described as “the ability to align ideas and emotions” which refers to the capability of an individual to understand and control his or her own emotions and at the same time recognize and managing other’s emotions. Therefore, a person has to be self-conscious, intelligent and managed to control emotional responses in different social situations. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is different compared to Intelligence Quotient (IQ). IQ test mainly focusing on measuring the cognitive abilities, that attempt to measure intelligence by a numerical score based on the standardised tests (Cohen, 2018). IQ does not change much in one’s life and tends to be moderately static. Meanwhile, EI likely to remain stable about 30 years despite certain areas can change due to life-changing events.

Another difference that can be found in EI is some models assumed EI is the same as cognitive ability which is measured by right or wrong questions referring to “Ability EI”. On the other hand, other constructs view EI as related to personality traits, a continuity of responses provides a deeper insight into a person's emotional capabilities referring to “Trait EI”. The earlier model of Salovey & Mayer (1990) followed an EI- construction capability that defined it as "the ability to recognize emotions, to access and create emotions in order to help thinking". Dr. K.V. Petrides (2001) later developed the Trait EI or also known as Trait Emotional Self-Efficacy.

Trait EI is a constellation of emotional perceptions that can be evaluated using questionnaires and scale ratings (Pita, Petrides, & Kokkinaki, 2007). This research study will be assessing the student’s trait EI by using the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short-Form (TEIQue-SF). TEIQue-SF comprises of 30 items which consists of two items from the 15 facets to measure the global trait EQ.

Past Research on Gender and Academic Self-Efficacy

According to Huang (2013), there have been an extensive research on gender differences in academic self-efficacy for the recent decades. The findings were inconsistent even though many researchers had investigated the gender differences in academic self-efficacy. Therefore, the differences between male and female in their own perceived self-efficacy suggest that gender need to be taken into consideration for any effort to improve perceived self-efficacy (Chavez, Beltran, Guerrero, Enriquez, & Reyes, 2014). This is because perceived self-efficacy is crucial in human performance, as it does not only directly affect behaviour, but it also affects important aspects such as goals, targets and opportunities in the social context.

Based on the study conducted by Chavez et al., (2014), the academic self-efficacy of the college students is measured and assessed according to some variables such as excellence variable, attention variable and communication variable. Firstly, the excellence variable encompasses the aspects of performing the assigned tasks, submitting tasks on time and attending class meeting. The results show that females show themselves as more self-efficient compared to males. In addition, females also show less dissatisfaction and the possibility of improvement. Likewise, females are better in attention variable which consist of concentrating towards listening to the professors or classmates and asking or giving comments during the lectures or meetings.

The last variable is the communication variables which involves expressing the ideas clearly, commenting and giving appropriate contributions, can give rise to arguments in disagreement and easy with public speech. Female interpret themselves to be more self-efficient because they are less likely to become more efficient than males (Chavez, Beltran, Guerrero, Enriquez, & Reyes, 2014). The differences found between males and females are