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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WILLINGNESS IN HELP SEEKING FROM PROFESSIONAL AND NON-PROFESSIONAL SOURCES

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This project is submitted in partial fulfilment of

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ABSTRACT

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WILLINGNESS IN HELP SEEKING FROM PROFESSIONAL AND NON-PROFESSIONAL SOURCES

Chan Yi Teng

This study sought to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and willingness in help seeking from professional and non-professional sources. A survey on 128 University of Malaysia Sarawak undergraduates is carried out to assess emotional intelligence, willingness to seek help from variety of sources and perceived usefulness of past help-seeking experience. Results indicated that there are significant correlation relationship between emotional intelligence and willingness in help-seeking. Those who are skilled at managing others' emotion were more willing to seek help. Individuals who had positive experience in help-seeking will have higher intention to seek help. The limitation and suggestion for future study were further discussed.

ABSTRAK

KECERDASAN EMOSI DAN KEINGINAN MENDAPATKAN BANTUAN DARIPADA SUMBER BANTUAN PROFESIONAL DAN BUKAN PROFESIONAL

Chan Yi Teng

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan perhububungan antara kecerdasan emosi dan keinginan mendapatkan bantuan daripada sumber bantuan professional dan bukan profesional. Satu tinjauan telah dijalankan ke atas 128 siswazah Universiti Malaysia Sarawak untuk menilai kecerdasan emosi, keinginan mendapatkan bantuan daripada pelbagai sumber dan manfaat pengalaman lepas semasa mendapatkan bantuan. Hasil kajian mendapati bahawa wujud korelasi yang signifikan antara kecerdasan emosi dan keinginan mendapatkan bantuan. Dapatan juga menunjukkan bahawa mereka yang berkemahiran dalam mengendalikan emosi orang lain lebih berkeinginan untuk mendapatkan bantuan. Individu-individu yang mempunyai pengalaman lepas yang positif akan mempunyai keinginan yang tinggi untuk mendapatkan bantuan. Limitasi dan cadangan untuk kajian akan datang turut dibincangkan.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter contains a background of the study that discuss about the developmental of emotional intelligence and previous researches regarding emotional intelligence. The problem statement will discuss the aim of the research. The objective and hypothesis of this study will be stated. The researcher will clarify the definition of the variable and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of Study

Research on emotional intelligence has been developed by many researchers in psychological, management and educational area from United Stated of America and Europe; nevertheless other researcher from Asian countries such as Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore have also contributed ideas to this field. Currently, the attention was switch to developing a meaningful measure of emotional intelligence. This is because many people believe that emotional intelligence is important to everyday life. Ciarrochi and Deane (2001) stated that it seems reasonable to assume that people who are poor in dealing in emotions will have worse relationships, poor mental health, and less success in their career.

According to Brackett, Mayer and Warner (2004), males who scored lower in emotional intelligence, primarily the inability to predict emotions and to use emotion to facilitate thought was related to negative outcomes, including illegal drug and alcohol use, deviant behaviour, and poor relations with friends.

Ciarrochi and Deane (2000 as cited in Ciarrochi and Deane, 2001) found that people low in emotion management competence are less willing to seek help from family, friends, and health professionals, given they most likely to become depressed, hopeless, and suicidal.

According to Ohtsuka (2005), help-seeking is an effective and adaptive behaviour and a fundamental problem-solving strategy. Most of the young people will not seek professional psychological help and they prefer to seek help from a variety of other sources such as family members, friends, and teachers (Boldero & Fallon, 1995). 90% of the adolescents prefer to tell their peer regarding distress rather than a professional (Kalafat & Elias, 1995 as cited in Ciarrochi, Deane &

Wilson, 2002). However, most of the times those youths do not obtain the help they need (Sheffield, Fiorenza, & Sofronoff, 2004). An empirical investigation about help seeking behaviour have shown that some individuals in need receive help simply because they do not ask for it (Wills & DePaulo, 1991 as cited in Raviv, Sills, Raviv, & Wilansky 2000). In addition, people may choose not to solicit help because they believe help is not available.

What determines a person seek help for emotional problem? Research has identified several factors that contribute to help seeking behaviour, such as (a) low expectation about help seeking outcome (Tinsley & Benton, 1978 as cited in Flisher, De Beer & Bokhorst, 2002), (b) fear of psychological treatment (Tinsley & Harris, 1976 as cited in Flisher, De Beer & Bokhorst, 2002), (c) a negative attitude to the counselling service (Flisher, De Beer & Bokhorst, 2002), (d) lack of information about the mental health service or the services it could provide (Form, 1955; Snyder, Hill, & Derken, 1972 as cited in Flisher, De Beer & Bokhorst, 2002), (e) a belief that their problems were not effectively important to explore with a counsellor (Rust & Davie, 1961 as cited in Flisher, De Beer & Bokhorst, 2002), (f) a belief that it is better to solve one's own problems without relying on a professional person (Flisher, De Beer & Bokhorst, 2002), (g) confidentiality (Rust & Davie, 1961; Hoover, 1967 as cited in Flisher, De Beer & Bokhorst, 2002). However, little research has investigated the relationship between emotional ability (e.g. emotional regulation and perception) and one's willingness to seek help (Ciarrochi & Deane, 2001).

In addition, according to Cusack, Deane, Wilson, and Ciarrochi (2004), helpfulness of past help experiences also contribute to help seeking behaviours.

Previous research has found that individuals, who had received help from a professional psychologist or counsellor, rated themselves as more likely to seek help for personal–emotional problems than those who had received no prior counselling (Cusack, Deane, Wilson, & Ciarrochi 2004). Similarly, a study conducted by Kuhl, Jarkon-Horlirck, and Morrissey (1997) found that adolescents with prior help seeking experience will have less barriers in help seeking.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Research on emotional intelligence and willingness in help seeking from professional and non-professional sources was done by Ciarrochi and Deane (2001; 2002) twice. The first research they did among university undergraduates and the results shown those reported less skilled at managing emotions were less willing to seek help from either professional source or non-professional sources. The second study focused on adolescents, and the results shown adolescents who were low in emotional awareness, and who poor at identifying, describing, and managing their emotions were least likely to seek help either professional sources or non-professional sources.

Ciarrochi and Deane (2001) investigated the relationships between emotional intelligence and willingness to seek help. Firstly, they make an assumption that people high in emotional intelligence will express less willingness to seek help because they believe themselves to be capable of handling their emotional problem on their own. However, the result shown those who less willing to seek help was reported feeling less skilled at managing emotions. That

means the ability in managing emotion also a factor which influences one's willingness to seek help.

Previous researches found that female having greater overall emotional intelligence but did not express more skill at regulating their own emotions (Ciarrochi, Chan & Bajgar, 2001). Beside that, according to Grinstein-Weissa, Fishmanb and Eisikovitsc (*in press*), there is a significant difference between males and females with regard to willingness in help seeking from professional and non-professional sources.

In a similar study on willingness in help seeking among gender conducted by Flisher, De Beer, and Bokhorst (2002), a study at University of Cape Town, among 13827 male students only 377 male students had received counselling service from a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist at the Students' Health Service. In contrast, among 10234 female students there are 528 females had been receiving counselling. This study showed that more female students sought help as compared to male students. According to Carlton and Deane (2000), in a survey of 694 young people between 18 and 24 years, there are 54% reported had considered suicide and 10% had attempted suicide but only 3% of those surveyed had sought medical care. This study indicates that a high proportion of young people with mental distress and psychiatric morbidity seldom seek help.

This study investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and willingness in help seeking from professional and non-professional sources to answer the following key questions:

1. Is there any relationship between emotional intelligence and willingness in help seeking?
2. Will the gender influence the emotional intelligence?
3. Will the ethnicity influence the willingness in help seeking?
4. Will the gender influence the willingness in help seeking?
5. Will the past help experience influence the willingness in help seeking?

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and willingness in help seeking from professional and non-professional sources.
2. To examine the relationship between managing self emotion and willingness in help seeking from professional and non-professional sources.
3. To examine the relationship between managing others' emotion and willingness in help seeking from professional and non-professional sources.
4. To examine the relationship between perceiving emotion and willingness in help seeking from professional and non-professional sources.
5. To identify the difference ability of emotional intelligence of the respondents based on male and female.

6. To identify the difference perception of respondents toward willingness in help seeking based on male and female.

7. To identify the difference perception of respondents toward willingness in help seeking based on ethnicity.

8. To examine relationship between past help seeking experience and willingness in help seeking from professional and non-professional sources.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

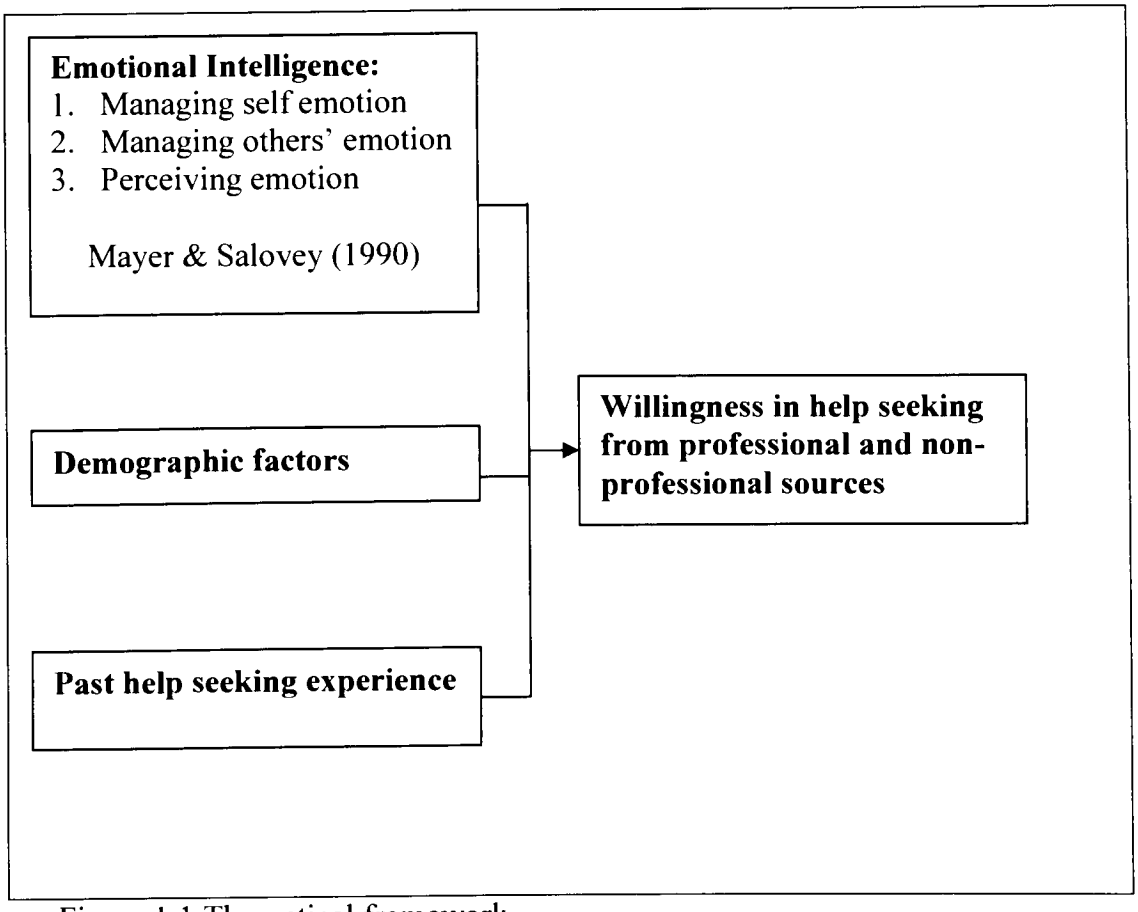

Figure 1.1 Theoretical framework

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The Hypotheses for the study are:

H_a1: There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and willingness in help seeking from professional and non-professional sources.

H_a2: There is a significant relationship between managing self emotion and willingness in help seeking from professional and non-professional sources.

H_a3: There is a significant relationship between managing others' emotion and willingness in help seeking from professional and non-professional sources.

H_a4: There is a significant relationship between perceiving emotion and willingness in help seeking from professional and non-professional sources.

H_a5: There is a significant difference between male and female with regard to emotional intelligence.

H_a6: There is a significant difference between male and female with regard to willingness in help seeking from professional and non-professional sources.

H_a7: There is a significant difference of respondent perception between the ethnicity and willingness in help seeking from professional and non-professional sources.

H_a8: There is a significant relationship between past help seeking experience and willingness in help seeking from professional and non-professional sources.

1.6 Significance of Study

This study investigates the relationship of emotional intelligence and willingness in help seeking from professional and non-professional sources to provide further empirical evidence to the validity of emotional intelligence. Particularly when a construct is new, empirical evidence contributes to a higher degree of validity to the theoretical implications and developments of the construct.

In addition, youths low in emotional identification skill may not realise the extant that they are depressed and may be unclear about whether or not they need to seek help (Ciarrochi, Deane, Wilson & Rickwood, 2002). Therefore, it is important, for counsellors to identify those people with poor management skills and to recognize such people may struggle to benefit from counselling. It is hoped

that this research can provide the necessary knowledge and information to our future counsellors.

1.7 Definition of Terms

1.7.1 Emotional intelligence

Conceptual: According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), emotional intelligence can be defined as the capacity to process emotional information accurately and efficiently, including that information relevant to the recognition, construction, and regulation of emotion in oneself and others.

Operational: Emotional intelligence in this study defined as ability that aware of emotions, ability to identify and express self emotions, and ability to regulate self emotion and others' emotion.

1.7.2 Manage self emotion

Conceptual: One able to monitor, evaluates, and sometimes acts to change mood (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Operational: Ability to direct their behaviour to bring out about moods, maintain positive mood and avoid negative mood, and control their mood.

1.7.3 Manage others' emotion

Conceptual: Ability to regulate and alter the affective reaction of others. (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Operational: Ability to control and change others' emotional reaction.

1.7.4 Perceiving emotion

Conceptual: Ability to appraise and express emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Operational: Ability that aware of the emotion changing in self or other.

1.7.5 Help Seeking

Conceptual: Help seeking is defined in the literature as a communication process with others, focusing on a specific problem or emotional pain which needs to be handled and which creates enough distress to seek either formal or informal sources of help. (Gourash, 1978 as cited in Grinstein-Weiss, Fishman, & Eisikovits, *in press*).

Operational: Help seeking in this context is willingness or intension to get help from professional or non-professional sources.

1.7.6 Professional Sources

Conceptual: Professional sources defined as formal help seeking and refer to seek help from social workers, psychologists, family doctors and school teacher (Grinstein-Weiss, Fishman, & Eisikovits, *in press*).

Operational: Professional sources in this study are referred to counsellor, psychologist and psychiatry.

1.7.7 Non-professional Sources

Conceptual: Non-professional sources defined as informal help and refer to seek help from family-based sources (parents, siblings, relatives), and peer group-based sources (best friends, adult friends, youth instructor/guide) (Grinstein-Weiss, Fishman, & Eisikovits, *in press*).

Operational: Non-professional sources in this study refer to friends (not related to the person who seeks help), parent, other relatives, and family members.

1.7.8 Gender

Conceptual: Gender refers to a person's self-representation as male or female (Institute of Medicine, 2001 as cited in Rohr, 2005).