THE RELATIONSHIP OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENE, THE BIG FIVE PERSONALITY AND LIFE SATISFACTION

DING I LING

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, THE BIG FIVE PERSONALITY AND LIFE SATISFACTION

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This study examines the relationship of emotional intelligence, the big five personality and life satisfaction. A sample of 100 respondents from a manufacturing company participates in this study by filling up measures for Emotional Intelligence, the Big Five indicators and Satisfaction with Life Scale. Little evidence was found for a relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Life Satisfaction and the Big Five Personality. Findings show that there is no relationship between life satisfaction and Big Five personality. Moderate relationships were found between Life Satisfactions and Big Five Personality, particularly Extraversion and Agreeableness. The personality was able to predict both emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. Recommendation was made for further research and limitation of the study was discussed.

ABSTRAK

HUBUNGAN KECERDASAN EMOSI DAN LIMA FAKTOR UTAMA PERSONALITI SERTA KEPUASAN HIDUP

DING I LING

Kajian ini dijalankan untuk mengkaji hubungan di antara Kecerdasan Emosi, lima faktor utama personaliti dan kepuasan terhadap kehidupan di kalangan pekerja di sebuah kilang pengeluaran. Sebanyak 100 individu mengambil bahagian dalam menjawab soal selidik berkaitan dengan Kecerdasan Emosi, Skala Lima Faktor Utama Personaliti dan Skala Kepuasan Terhadap Kehidupan. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan hubungan yang lemah di antara Kecerdasan Emosi, Lima Faktor Utama Personaliti dan Kepuasan Terhadap Kehidupan. Terdapat perhubungan yang signifikasii antara Skala Kepuasan Tehadap Kehidupan dengan Extrovert dan Penyetujuan. Sebagai kesimpulannya, pemboleh ubah personaliti dapat digunakan untuk meramalkan pemboleh ubah untuk kecerdasan emosi dan kepuasan terhadap hidup. Pengkaji telah mencadangkan beberapa cadangan untuk pengkaji pada masa akan datang dan limitasi kajian juga telah dibincang dalam kajian ini.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher would elucidate on the background, research problem and impact of this study. In order to enhance the reliability and integrity of this project, other sections such as conceptual framework, research objectives and hypothesis is included. In addition to that, predictions and assumptions have been made and documented in this chapter with regards to the relationship of emotional intelligence, big five personality and life satisfaction.

1.0 Introduction

Today, magazines and articles often write on the Emotional Intelligence (EI) as significant issues and stressing on the importance of EI as a tool to predict the level of life achievement. Thus, it has become a trend and an urge for researcher to analyze on the concepts of EI by conducting researches to study it. The study on EI started gaining popularity after an aspect of EI was introduced in the publication of *Times Magazine* in 1995.

Times Magazine article in 1995 leads to the development of EI studies and this had attracted many experts in psychological, educational, management level researchers and consultants to participate and conduct their studies in related fields (Wong & Law, 2002). Initially, Mayer and Salovey (1990) were among the two earliest researchers who proposed and utilize the term EI to represent the ability of people to deal with their emotions in their studies. Moreover, EI was further defined as an ability to monitor and regulate one's feelings and those of others and to use feelings to guide thought and action (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; cited in Wong & Law, 2002). However, Goleman (1996) redefined EI as "the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in us and in our relationships".

Life satisfactions (LS) are major goals of most people (Diener, 1998). According to Diener (1998), as the nation of the world move into an era of

postmaterialism, in which sheer physical survival is no longer the major care, satisfaction of life become obviously significant in each human life.

Personalities is believed to be a major factor influencing the LS of a person. Many researchers are interested in how personality traits interact with EI as an ability to produce a good satisfaction of life. One scientific challenge for researcher is to determine which personality variables are of fundamental importance for LS.

1.1 Background of the study

Emotional intelligence has emerged as an interesting topic in the scientific field of study as well as in public agenda, ever since the publication of *Times Magazine* in 1995 (Goleman 1995 cited in Bar-on, 2005). Psychologists and educators are mainly interested in studying EI because they are keen to investigate the implications of EI on individual life. There are so many question imposed by researchers such as "What is the relationship between EI in determining success?" (e.g. academic, life, job and family) and "How EI affect interpersonal relations?" to verify the claim of EI variables or factor in implicating an individual life. Besides that, some even asked questions such as "Do people with high EI behave differently than people who with low EI?" and "Will people with high EI be more satisfied of their life than people with low EI?"

Nowadays, people believe that if one possesses high Emotional Intelligence, then he can cope better in facing the challenges in life. In addition to that, he can also control his emotions more effectively and gain satisfaction in life. According to Palmer et al. (2001), EI has been theoretically linked with life, and researchers had explored the empirical relationship between EI and individual differences in LS. Several researches have examined the relationship between EI and life satisfaction (Bar-On, 1997; Ciarrochi, Chan, & Caputi, 2000; Mayer et al., 2000; Palmer, Donaldson, & Stough, 2001). Study on several EI instruments by Palmer et al. (2001) showed utilization of EQi, 2000; TMMS, 2000; Bar-On, 1997 found moderate positive correlations between EI and life satisfaction. As interpersonal skills is concerned an individual with high EI, is expected to face positive outcomes such as better social and personal relationships, whilst intrapersonal aspects of EI such as mood regulation would be expected to relate higher levels of life satisfaction and lower levels of depression (Austin, Square, Saklofske, & Egan, *in press*).

Recent study by Bar-On (2005) showed the model of Emotional Social Intelligence in predicting various aspects of human performance, behaviors and performance in social interactions at school and in the workplace. In addition, it also pointed out some impacts on physical health, psychological health, self-actualization and subjective well being (Bar-On, 2005). On the other hand, subjective well being (SWB) is stated as a result from feeling of satisfaction (a) with one's physical health and oneself as a person, (b) with one's close interpersonal relationships, and (c) with one's occupation and financial situation (Bar-On, 2005). Moreover, according to

Diener, Oishi and Lucas (2003) SWB covers people's emotional and cognitive evaluations on their life; which includes happiness, peace, fulfillment and LS.

EI is equal to or to some extend is more important than Intelligence Quotient (IQ) in predicting life success (Goleman, 1996). More importantly, Ciarrochi et al. (2000) found that EI correlated with life satisfaction even after controlling for IQ and personality variables suggesting that EI accounts for unique variance. Demographic factors such as health, income, educational background, and marital status only account a small portion in the variance of LS. Previous studies showed that although EI was not related to IQ, however to some extend there is a significant relationship between both variables. Bastian et al. (*In press*) conducted a study of 246 predominantly first-year tertiary students and found that correlations between EI and the life skills showed higher EI was associated with higher LS. This is proven when both variables were used in specific personality measures (e.g., empathy) and other criterion measures such as life satisfaction (Ciarrochi, Chan & Caputi, 1999).

Besides that, Prenda and Lachman (2001), study with a large sample representative of the United Sates population aged 25-74, documented a positive linear relationship between age and life satisfaction. In a large sample of Germans with a wide age range (20-90), there was a curvilinear association between age and LS. LS were the highest among those aged 45-65 and lower among people younger and older. Other recent studies found there is no relationship or a negative relationship of LS and age. Studies that have considered different but related

constructs, such as self-esteem, have found curvilinear associations through adulthood and older age (Wagner, Moseley, Grant, Core, & Owens, 2002).

Many researches have been conducted to investigate the relationship between EI and personality, and the result shown that the Big Five personality has positive correlation with the trait of EI. The 33-item scale was reported by Schutte et al. (1998) has a significant correlation with Openness to Experience and non-significant relationships with the other Big Five personality traits. Petrides and Furnham (2000) have examined relations between EI and the Big Five personality in a sample of 166 undergraduate and post-graduate students. EI was measured based on Bar-On EQi and personality NEO-PI-R shows modest correlations between trait EI and neuroticism, extraversion, and conscientiousness. Trait EI showed little relation to either openness to experience or agreeableness.

There are also some researches reported that some personality dimensions, specifically, neuroticism, extraversion and positive and negative affect were strong predictors but not the determinants factors of LS (Diener & Larsen, 1993; McCrae & Costa, 1991; Myers & Diener, 1995 as cited in Palmer, Donaldson & Stough, 2001). Additionally, trait EI measures had been verified that it had large significant correlations with Extraversion (E) and Neuroticism (N) (with positive and negative signs respectively) whilst smaller significant positive correlations with Openness (O),

Agreeableness (A) and Conscientiousness (C) have also been found (Dawda & Hart, 2000; Petrides & Furnham, 2001; Saklofske et al., 2003; Schutte et al., 1998 as cited in Austin, Square, Saklofske & Egan, *in press*). Personality dispositions such as extraversion, neuroticism, and self-esteem can remarkably influence levels of satisfaction (Diener, Oishi & Lucas, 2003).

People nowadays live in developing and challenging environment, thus it is hard to measure the personality in order to investigate satisfaction level of a person's life but this can be made possible through measuring EI. Hence, the connection of EI, the big five personality especially extraversion and neuroticism imposed a relevant relationship with life.

1.2 Significance of the study

Emotional Intelligence has been theoretically claimed to be related to several important human values namely life satisfaction, the quality of interpersonal relationships, and success in occupations that involve considerable reasoning with emotional information such as those involving creativity, leadership, sales and psychotherapy (Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1995; Palmer, Walls, Burgess, & Stough, 2001; Salovey & Mayer, 1990 as cited in Palmer, Donaldson, & Stough, 2001). It is conceivable that people with high EI might be able to judge others well, and good in managing their own feelings. Besides that, they are capable of promoting intellectual growth by being more resistant towards negative life and promote life satisfaction.

Based on the assumption that researchers would like to predict the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Life Satisfaction; if the emotional intelligence of a people is high, the life satisfaction aspect will tend to be elevated. Hence, people should resist from deviant behavior such as mental health problem (depression), suicidal thought, smoking, use of drugs and excessive alcohol intake. Then satisfaction with life will be improved. By some means, low level of life satisfaction might cause problem such as marital relationship especially within intimate partner or families members. Researchers believe that moderating on personality trait factors such as extraversion, emotional stability and openness to new experiences will contribute to the level of satisfaction of life.

The nature of the relationship between EI, life satisfaction, and personality constructs are known to predict life satisfaction were also assessed on their posing positive and negative affect. Previous researches on EI are linked to the big five. People who have stability in the trait of personality will tend to lead a happy life. Thus, it is important for researchers to investigate the role of the big five and life satisfaction of respondents.

1.3 Research Statement

Research on the relationship between EI and LS had been done by researcher such as Bar-On, 1997; Ciarrochi, Chan, & Caputi, 2000; & Mayer et al., 2000. Besides, much research also had been study on the personality trait with EI and personality with well being.

However, no study has been done to combine these three variables in one study. This current study is aimed at further exploration on the unique predictive value of EI, in relation to life satisfaction and conducted from the ability perspective. It was hypothesized that EI would predict unique variance in life satisfaction. The aim of this study is to investigate the dimension of personality in relation to emotional intelligence and life satisfaction by controlling the demographic variables.

This study investigated the relationship of emotional intelligence, the big five personality and life satisfaction to answer the following key questions: “Do people with high EI have higher satisfaction towards life?” “Do people with high EI will be more satisfied of their life than people with low EI?” “Will the big five personality will moderate the relationship of EI and LS?” “Do Extraversion people will tend to be more satisfied with their life?” and “Does gender influence the scores on EI?”

1.4 Research Objective

1. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and personality.
2. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction.
3. To examine the relationship between personality and life satisfaction.
4. To determine gender differences in the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction.
5. To study the relationship between extraversion and life satisfaction.
6. To study the relationship between extraversion and emotional intelligence.
7. To study the relationship between neuroticism and life satisfaction.
8. To study the relationship between agreeableness and life satisfaction.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

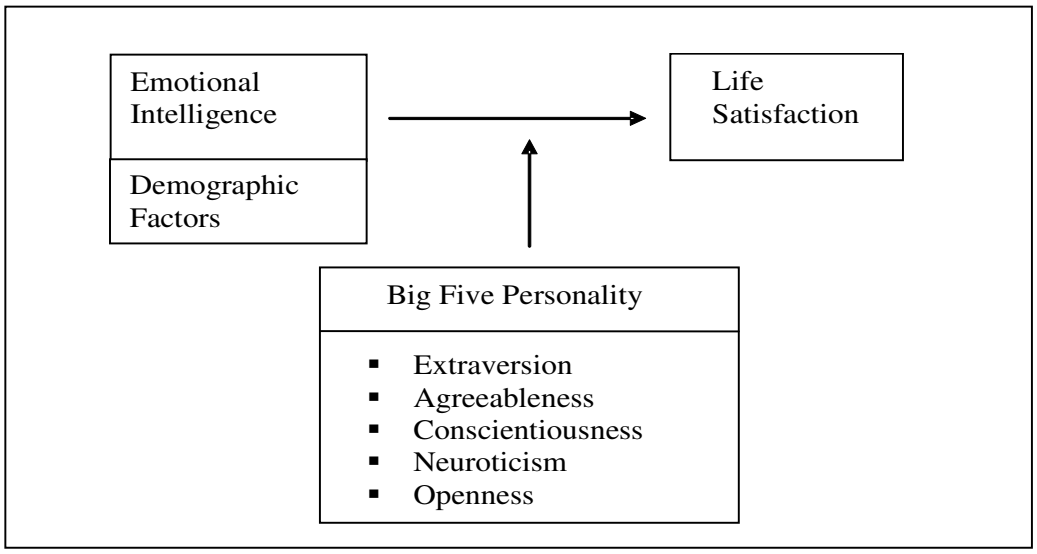

Figure 1: The figure shows theoretical framework of the study between emotional intelligence the big five personality and life satisfaction

1.6 Research Hypothesis

The research hypotheses for this study are stated as below:

Ha1: There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction.

Ha2: There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and personality

Ha3: There is a relationship between personality and life satisfaction.

Ha4: There is a significant difference between gender differences in the relationship of emotional intelligence and life satisfaction.

Ha5: There is a positive relationship between extraversion and life satisfaction

Ha6: There is positive relationship between extraversion and emotional intelligence

Ha7: There is a positive relationship between neuroticism and life satisfaction.

Ha8: There is a positive relationship between agreeableness and life satisfaction.

.

1.7 Definition of terms

1.7.1 Emotion

Conceptual definition

Emotions are recognized as one of three or four fundamental classes of mental operations that typically arise in response to an event, either internal or external, that has a positively or negatively valence meaning for the individual (Mayer & Salovey, 1990)