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Research paper

An Effectiveness of Emotional and Social Intelligence Intervention (Stress Tolerance)

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Abstract

This research to investigate whether emotional intelligence developmental training can lead to increase with the Module of Emotional and Social Intelligence (Stress Tolerance). A study with quasi-design was employed with self-report assessment conducted as baseline and posttest following 14 weeks training programmed. The Faculty of psychology and Education, University Malaysia Sabah students participated in the study, and 19 students were recruited to the experiment group and receive the intervention. Meanwhile, 21 students were recruited to the control group. Recruitment based on the lower score on emotional Quotient inventory (EQ-i). The result of this finding reported that Stress Tolerance subscale had increase in mean score after intervention. A conclusion, most of the emotional intelligence training had a positive effect on the students in intervention group. While, there is no different score between control group for pre and post intervention.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence; Stress Management; Intervention*

1 Introduction

Since the early 20th century there has been speculation that in addition to general intelligence another type of intelligence may exist to facilitate social interaction process. The scholar found that the cognitive abilities are not the unique predictor of successful an adaptation but the emotional competence have to be taken into consideration. A large body of research now suggests that emotions play an important role in guiding thinking and decision making for example happy moods can facilitate divergent thinking an enhance creativity (1). Besides that, these abilities are expected to influence people's capacity to interact well with others, communicate effectively, handle conflict, manage stress, perform under pressure and create a positive work environment.

The problem of unemployment among graduation becomes one of the issues every year in Malaysia. According to ministry of High education and ministry of Human resource The Ministry of Malaysia Higher Education (2006) about 59,315 graduated students an unemployed. One of the reasons is lack of soft skill. The importance of soft skills in contributing to organizational success in the workplace for an employee, manager or leader has been recognizing (2). Individual with soft skills will exhibit traits such as greater leadership, rapport building, relationship management and influencing abilities (3). Soft skills are also commonly known as interpersonal or social skill. Nowadays, working environment where customers and employees are more demanding, having soft skills is something that one simply cannot survive without it (4). Soft skills are term of sociology that related to emotional intelligence. Interpersonal and intrapersonal is a soft skills, however when we look at modal of emotional intelligence developed by Bar-On & Parker (5), Intrapersonal and Interpersonal skills are two major domain from these modal beside three other domain such are adaptability, stress management and General Mood.

Since the concept of emotional intelligence is increasingly needed in the working world, it is important to prepare students who will graduate and will enter the working world with the exploration of emotional skills themselves and more understand about how emotions can affect learning and performance (6). Therefore, student can use these abilities as extra mark when their go for interview. Learning to manage emotions and relationships with others is a lifelong training. Therefore, there is an intervention or training develops based on emotional Intelligence in effort to increase an emotional intelligence skills. Increasing evidence that emotions play an adaptive role in guiding human behavior, thinking and communication, led to the idea that emotional abilities represent a distinct form of intelligence. According to Kagan (7), emotional intelligence skills can be developing and some research had done for example by Bar-On (8) using military as a subject in his research. The result from his research was emotional Intelligence affect the ability to manage emotional and stress. Besides that, emotional intelligence as a Social drive to achieve personal goals for the realization of internal potential and lead a more meaningful life, able to control feelings and thoughts. This finding certainly makes sense because lack of Emotional and social Intelligence skills can lead to anxiety and depression problems associated with testing reality.

Students with the mastery of these skills had more extra value while attending a job interview because this element is one of the aspects that will be seen by prospective employers. This is caused by too many applications but for a vacancy was limited. Employers will tend to select candidates who will have technical skills or soft skills because it will be able to save costs and time if candidate employees need to be trained in advance. In addition, with this social Emotional Intelligence modules, able to enhance self-

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improvement module already in Malaysia but many are for employees such as teachers (and the head of Department (9, 10). A module related to student development is still rare, especially focuses in human development related to emotional intelligence and social skills.

One of the modules of Emotional and Social Intelligence developed by researcher is Stress Management Training. As we know, Stress is common and it is always relevant at any time either to students or o others. As university students, they cannot avoid stress and it is come from many ways and mostly come from academic and also environment. According to Waghachavare, Dhumale (11), stress its association with various academic. Out of the 1,224 respondents, 24.4% (299) experienced stress. Among them, 38.5% (115), 34.1% (102) and 27.4% (82) were dental, medical and engineering students, respectively. Finding research from Habibah Elias, Wong Siew Ping and Maria Chong Abdullah (2011) also have similar finding where there is a different stress level by academic. Medicine and Health Sciences higher stress level compared to others followed by Engineering and Veterinary Medicine. While, the Educational Study and Forestry place in bottom two. The findings show that students studying medicine and health sciences had the highest mean stress score of 1051.8 with standard deviation of 342.29. This finding supports Dyrbye and colleagues's (2006) report. Dyrbye and colleagues stated that medical students are in higher risk of depression disorders and anxiety disorders compared to the general population. This is due to the exposure of abundant psychological distress and personality predispositions (12).

One of the components in emotional intelligence is stress tolerance which means someone able to withstand adverse events and stressfull situation without falling apart. These people are generally able to cope with stress actively and positively. Since social emotional intelligence has been proven to be a variables and moderator, the researcher began to expand this aspect of the study using social emotional intelligence as a training.

In this research, training based on the need for those who are weak in emotional intelligence. A study conducted by Slaski and Cartwright (13) on some managers after training of social emotional intelligence had an increased and significant. The participants also good in mental health as well as being eager to work in compared to managers who do not receive social emotional intelligence training.

Schutte et al. (14) have provided a training of Emotional and Social Intelligence to university students. The training program was provided at the beginning of the course. Students who received emotional and social intelligence training get a much higher score at the end of the semester and more confident to finished their study than those who did not received emotional and social intelligence training. Emotional and social intelligence was applied to students indirectly in learning but not all individuals are aware of the skills absorbed in the learning (15). The effectiveness of the program is still being questioned by employers and the Ministry of Human Resources (2006) itself which states that there are several elements that are still weakening among current graduates to gain job opportunities such as lack of communication skills and lack of confidence. Therefore,the aims of this study is to enhance students' emotional and social intelligence using the Social Emotional Intelligence Training Module. In particular, this study aims to examine the level of social emotional intelligence for control and treatment group before and after the implementation of the Emotional and Social Intelligence training.

2. Methodology

2.1. Design of Research

This study was quasi experimental design within subject design using pre and posttest. The emotional intelligence training program was implemented by researcher. Pretest given before conducted the treatment and posttest given after completing the treatment.

2.2. Sample and Location

476 students year 2 from Faculty of Psychology and Education involved in pre test. However, only 42 students was selected and categorized as lower in Emotional Intelligence using Emotional Quotient inventory (EQ-i) questionnaire. There are two group selected into experiment and control group. The sample consist 19 participants for experiment group and 21 students into control group. The first step done in selecting respondents were researchers divide each dimension and the sub scale to three percentile of high level, medium and low. Respondents who were under percentile in every dimension and also sub scales will be selected to follow a treatment session. As a result a total of 40 students selected under the low mean scores.

2.3. Data Analysis

Data was analyzed with statistical package for social science version 20 using non parametric analysis. Mann-Whitney U test used to look a difference of mean score for the experiment and control group meanwhile Wilcoxon test used to look a difference of median score into group (experiment and control group).

2.4. Instruments

This study uses an Emotional Quotient Inventory designed by Bar-On (8) has 133 items and contains five Likert scales which are "very rarely about me" until "very often about me". Filling the questionnaire takes 30 to 40 minutes. This research tool fits those aged 16 years and above. This questionnaire containing two parts, part (A) is the information about the respondents and part (b) emotional and social intelligence skills divided into fifteen (15) sub scale. However, in this article researcher only used one of the result which is stress tolerance sub scales.

3. Results and Discussions

The analysis done by stress tolerance sub scale in stress management components of emotional intelligence. The result shows that there are differences in median score tests before and after intervention in experimental group in sub scale of stress tolerance (pre = 26.0, post = 30.0). *(See Table 1)*

Table 1: The Differences in Median Score of Stress Tolerance Sub Scale for Emotional and Social Intelligence

	Experiment Group (n=19)			
Sub Scales	Median Score before test	Median Score after test	*Z score*	*p Values*
Stress Tolerence	26.0	30	-3.77	.000

*P <.01***

Based on the results in the table 1 shows stress tolerance sub scale were significant for experimental group. The results show that the training given to the group, this experiment has a beneficial effect. This is because students have learned to control themselves when in stress situation. There are two activities that used for this intervention which are Breathing exercise and coping strategies. Before students did breathing exercise, there are required to list a situation which often bring stress and coping strategies that their used. Each students share with their friends and from this activities students get experience about situations and know the way to handle if there in same situation. According to Stein (16) there are three components that a person is not easily influenced by stress, 1) capable of designing positive action to cope with stressful situ-

ation, 2) capable to established themselves in an optimistic, 3) able to feel confident.

The next activity for stress tolerance subscale is breathing exercise. According to Courtney (17) breathing allows our body to get oxygen that needed for metabolism and replace it by carbon dioxide. Another important thing about oxygen in body is to balancing the physiology and psychology. Its control the nervous system and circulation system. Students need to take a deep breathing by inhale and exhale with proper way such as abdomen will be bloated because of the air that enters the lungs. This process repeated for three times and its take about 15 minutes to complete the exercise. An instruction will be given by researcher.

Meanwhile, there are no difference median scores for control group before and after intervention. This is because control group not given a treatment as in experiment group (pre = 29.0, and post = 29.0). See Table 2. To ensure that there is no difference scores before treatment between the two groups, pre test has given to both and result was proofed ($z = -.467$, $p \geq .05$). See table 3. Other than that, Mann Whitney test shows that there are significant difference mean score between control and experiment group. See table 4.

Table 2: The Differences in Median Score of Stress Tolerance Sub Scale for emotional and Social Intelligence

		Control Group (n=21)		
Sub Scales	Median Score before test	Median Score after test	*Z score*	***p Values***
Stress Tolerence	29.0	29.0	-.163	.871

Table 3: The Differences in Mean Score of Stress Tolerance Sub Scale for Control and Experiment Group Before Intervention

		Mean Rank		
Sub Scales	Experiment group	Control Group	*Z score*	***p Values***
Stress Tolerence	19.61	21.31	-.054	.957

Table 4: The Differences in Mean Score of Stress Tolerance Sub Scale for Control and Experiment Group After Intervention

		Mean Rank		
Sub Scales	Experiment group	Control Group	*Z score*	***p Values***
Stress Tolerence	27.55	14.12	-3.659	.000

Training was given for one semester and each will be practiced in the classroom. Other than that the participants were also given outside training for one week. This is in accordance with the method used by Nelis, Quoidbach (10) which are emotional intelligence training given 4 weeks and one week intervals to provide an opportunity for the respondent to apply the training in the form of a manifest that is in their lives. According to Lynn (18) that the role of the facilitator (trainer's) is very critical in helping participants develop emotional intelligence. When providing treatment, researchers presented the skills in order to obtain better results. Therefore there are no differences of training delivery because it came from the same individual.

An Emotional and Social intelligence models used in building emotional intelligence training for social research to affect positive changes where there are changes in the median score after the respondents were given training. The findings of this study are consistent with findings by Freedman (19) where he uses a model of emotional and social intelligence as a curriculum teaching for a year. The findings he reports that emotional and social intelligence of children follow the curriculum has increased and significant. The children better understand and portray themselves, can manage and control their emotions and be able to adapt into the school environment. The findings of this study indicate that emotional and social intelligence module built by researcher can monitor with accurate and such changes can be measured.

4. Conclusion

As a result of the study indicated there is a training effect in the Group experiment in this study. The training was tailored to the sub scale in the higher level of Quotient Inventory questionnaire. After an experiment activities, group given a test before and after treatment, and showed significant change. The median score was increased compared to the median score the test before. This improvement has shown the availability of training effects against the respondents in this study. It is hoped that in future the application of training be given to randomly selected groups to see the impact of the effectiveness of the module not only against individuals who are weak in emotional intelligence but can also be used to moderate or high score in emotional and social intelligence. Training should be given in two or three times and respondents need to practice in any particular period.

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