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The Impact of Emotional Intelligence towards Political Behaviour among University Students

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Abstract

In this experimental study, the issue is focused on the influence of emotional intelligence in shaping the political behaviour of university youth students. The specific objective of this study is to examine the impacts of emotional intelligence competency on political behaviour among youth at the university by looking at the significance difference in the treatment group and the control group through application of emotional intelligence module. A total of 608 university students were selected as respondents from four public universities in Malaysia. The measuring tools used were the Emotional Intelligence Self-Description Inventory (EISDI), and the Political Behaviour Questionnaire (PBQ). In this study, T-test analysis and ANOVA test were used to determine the difference between the two control and treatment groups. The findings showed that there was a significant impact on the post-test for the treatment group due to the pre-and post-treatment differences. However, the findings from the control group showed no significant value. In addition, the findings show that the treatment group has the impact of changing the political behaviour with the implementation of emotional intelligence competencies in the teaching modules. The findings of this study provided sharing of the importance of the implementation of emotional intelligence among university students to form positive behaviours in political aspects.

Keywords: *Emotional intelligence; Political; Behaviour; Students.*

1. Introduction

Youth plays a major role in a country's progressive development. They involve in various aspects such as in the education and development up until the struggle to defend the state's sovereignty. The biggest influence of the youth in the aspect of struggle can be seen since before independence. The strength of these youth especially those with high motivation and mission were able to attract political thinking and behaviour in order to physically and mentally develop a country. Thus, the leadership of any nations depends on the intellectual education as well as emotional intelligence. The establishment of the country through election started from the thinking and understanding of the dominant society with the influence of the youth. In fact, various ideological strands that influence the thinking and behaviour of youth in developing the country could be seen. On the contrary, there exists youth who turned to a more aggressive and radical approach due to a dissatisfaction towards the country's system. Research has been conducted to measure political behaviour and its relation to the level of emotional intelligence among youth. Therefore, this study is hoped to enable the researcher to produce a model of emotional intelligence in order to help prepare a more focused, mature and rational political situation especially with the various races and beliefs in Malaysia.

2. Background of Study

The role of university students at the public universities is very significant with the country's progressive development. Incorporated in history about the reality of youth struggles from the education stream in the quest for national independence even to this age, youth are the front liners who are hoped to be a leader who can lead the nation towards a more dignified position as the survival of glorious civilization [1]. Youth voters have their own perceptions on national leadership [2]. This can be seen through various youth movements through print media, new media and open voices through open demonstrations [1]. However, youth students are now detected to turn to aggressive and radical approaches, reaching a degree of concern in issues involving national politics [3]. With that, a mechanism is geared towards assisting students through the model of emotional intelligence in political behaviour of youth students. The relationship between the variables is expected to provide explanation to the youth's interest in politics in a more mature and rational manner. This situation can also highlight positive emotional intelligence function so that behaviour becomes more dominant towards peace, by not using methods that can undermine pure values [4]. The most important contribution of this research is to implement the model of emotional intelligence in a compulsory course such as Nationhood (*Kenegaraan*) at all Malaysian universities.

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3. Statement of Problem

An undeniable point is that students' political movement can threaten social well-being and their safety if not pointed out in a more significant way for the security of the people and the country, according to [1], who studied on the awareness and political behaviour among students in 11 public universities in Malaysia (UA). Students are prone to attend the left-wing political talks outside campus. Political youth activism for national elections can be traced through the way and style they engage in campaigning, their passionate in expressing their support and aggressiveness in mobilizing the political party machinery [5]. The trend of youth in voting is said to be very significant in helping the victory of a political party. Teh Fui Khim [6] in his study explained that there was an increase in youth misconduct in statistics that showed that they were weak in controlling their emotions and the desire to have a more positive direction. In fact, the national newspaper [7] also discussed the way youth express their views on the politics of the country by demonstrating, rioting or humiliating in social media is not a mature act, instead making the youth irresponsible to the loss of manners and discretion. Obviously, there is a need for stability in emotion so that today's youth problems can be solved in a more prudent, rewarding and knowledgeable way [4].

4. Research Question

What is the significant impact of the emotional intelligence competency module on the political behaviour of university students?

5. Hypothesis

There is a significant impact of the emotional intelligence competency module on the political behaviour of university students.

6. Research Methodology

6.1. Research Design

This study is a quantitative study with quasi-experimental design. The quasi-experimental design is usually used to evaluate the effectiveness of a programmed when the respondents of the study cannot be distributed randomly, besides, the natural characteristics of the respondents are the main priority [8]. In the context of this design, there are two groups of respondents, i.e. one as a treatment group and the other as a control group. These groups were required to answer the questionnaire twice, i.e. during pre-test and post-test. This method is used to observe the difference between the two groups which received treatment and did not receive treatment. The needs of this study are descriptive and hypothesis testing in which according to McIntyre [9], hypothesis testing has an approach to the interpretation of independent variables in two or more factors under certain circumstances.

6.2. Research Site

The study was conducted at four public universities representing all public universities in Malaysia. It is divided into four zones, namely the North Zone, the Southern Zone, the Eastern Zone and the Western Zone. The study focuses only on the public university which means other universities such as private universities and colleges are not involved.

6.3. Sampling

The sampling method used in this study is purposive sampling, which is aimed to obtain a group of respondents with certain characteristics based on the needs of the researchers [8]. 608 respondents selected were among those aged between 19 and 25 pursuing diploma and bachelor's degree undertaking the Nationhood or *Kenegaraan* courses, which is 295 students for control group and 313 students is for treatment group.

6.4. Instrument

The current study is a quantitative study which uses questionnaire. The Questionnaire of Emotional Intelligence Self-Description Inventory [10] was used to measure students' emotional intelligence competency. The reliability of this instrument is .876. Whilst, Political Behaviour Questionnaire (PBQ) [4] was also used to measure the political behaviour of youth students. The reliability of this instrument is .681. The reliability of these two surveys has a relatively high reliability value and can be believed to be used to obtain quality research results. The validity of the construct was analysed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Oldin (KMO) factor analysis. The KMO total for EISDI is .624, while KMO for PBQ is .681. Fact analysis needs to be proven by KMO which is more than 0.60. In all of the studies, KMO values are greater than 0.60.

7. Results of Analysis

There is a significant difference in the analysis performed on the pre- and post-test for the treatment groups. However, the analysis showed there is no significant difference in the pre- and post-test for the control groups.

7.1. Analysis of Control Group and Treatment Group

7.1.1. Pre-test and Post-test for the Control Group

Table 1 and 2 shows the results of pre-test and post-test conducted on all control groups at the four public universities in Malaysia. The results of the study were not significant (t = -2.405, df = 294, sig. = .017). The t-test showed that there was no significant difference in the perception of Emotional Intelligence and Political Behaviour in the pre-test and post-test on the control group. The findings show that studies conducted on the pre-test and post-test test do not have any significance on the changes in emotional intelligence and political behaviour among the respondents.

Table 1: Mean of Pre-test and Post-test Control Group

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	3.5645	295	.28371	.01652
Post-test	3.6298	295	.37521	.02185

Table 2: Paired Differences of Pre-test and Post-test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig2
Pre-test & Post-test	-.06529	.46638	-2.405	294	.017

7.1.2. Pre-test and Post-test for the Treatment Group

Table 3 dan 4 shows the result of the pre-test and post-test conducted on the treatment groups at all the four universities in Malaysia. The test results are significant (t = -5.104, df = 312, sig. = .000). The t-test shows that there is a significant difference in the Emotional Intelligence and Political Behaviour assessment before and after treatment was conducted. The findings proved that the treatment given affected the respondents' perception on the changes in emotional intelligence and political behaviour.

Table 3: Mean of Pre-test and Post-test Treatment Group

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	3.5764	313	.31403	.01775

Post-test	3.7124	313	.37134	.02099

Table 4: Paired Differences of Pre-test and Post-test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig2
Pre-test & Post-test	-.13598	.47135	-5.104	312	.000

8. Discussion

The current study was conducted to compare and observe the difference in emotional intelligence on the political behaviour of the two groups of university students; i.e. control and treatment group. The group which shows the difference revealed the significant analysis result and its effectiveness. This illustrates the effectiveness of the treatment test by using the Emotional Intelligence Module and the control test revealed that there is no difference in which proved that there is no difference to the group which did not receive any treatment. The implication of this study is to reveal the importance and function of emotional intelligence on the university students as the youth are instrumental in building the nation to become more stable and rational in their thinking and emotion. This stability can lead to a more positive behaviour as youths are pillars of the society in order to abstain conflict and crisis [4].

Every issue should be dealt with through smarter negotiations and not through prolonged fights through the mass media and speculation that can create hatred to spoil the country's peaceful scenario [11]. In conclusion, our strength is not a sophisticated war tool, nor is it to be a war state, but our strength is in terms of emotion and positive attitudes with a solid solidarity in society [7]. All parties can contribute not only in terms of energy and time, but also expertise, knowledge and influence of positive values that can be emulated together [5]. This is the true wholeness of the independence of the nation and the people, thus perseveringly building a truly sovereign state in the course of a dynamic transformation.

9. Conclusion

This study concludes that the emotional intelligence module has an impact on the perception of the political behaviour of youth students who are studying specifically in university courses. The emotional intelligence module affects the perceptions about the behaviour of political youth students with the knowledge that is studied in the Nationhood (*Kenegaraan)* courses. There is a difference between the control and the treatment group in the test. Hence, with the differences it can be concluded that there is an effect of the modules on the respondents. From the results of this study, the Emotional Intelligence Model needs to be implemented by highlighting the relevant mechanisms, through the implementation of the Emotional Intelligence competence among youth students to achieve authentic political behaviour in line with the suitability of the state's demands.

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