Emotional intelligent and job satisfaction among technical and vocational teachers: A case study on Malaysia southern zone technical and vocational college
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Abstract
Emotional intelligent (EQ) could be used as an additional tool to creating a quality education and the acquisition of knowledge as a basis for a teacher in his duty as a teacher. However, do gender, age and experience as educators affect their emotional intelligence when facing with educational transformation? Therefore, the purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among teachers of vocational and technical colleges in the Southern Zone, Malaysia, using Goleman Model of self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills. Simple random sample selection was done and a total of 138 technical teachers were selected as respondents. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 19.0 for descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. The mean value was calculated to determine the level of emotional intelligence among the teachers. The findings showed that the respondents’ emotional intelligence and job satisfaction were at a moderate level. Meanwhile, the results showed a significant relationship between the level of emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. In addition, the level of emotional intelligence varied according to the work experience. However, there was no difference in the level of emotional intelligence in terms of gender and age. Generally, there was a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. It could be concluded that EQ does affect the teachers’ job satisfaction level.

Key words: Emotional intelligent, educational transformation, Job Satisfaction, Vocational Teachers

INTRODUCTION
The concept of emotional intelligence (EQ) is a concept of intelligence related to awareness of emotions and feelings and how those feelings can interact with mental intelligence (IQ). EQ can be defined as a subset of social intelligence that refers to the ability of a person to examine the feelings of himself or of others, distinguish emotions and use them as a guide in thinking and corresponding action (Young, 1996). Smigla and Pastoria (2000) state that EQ is not just good for others, but can constructively solve problems when a problem occurs. Florence (2007) stipulates that human emotion has not only become the subject of research and clinical experiments by psychologists, but has also been made the subject of various perspective studies in the social sciences and humanities. According to Florence (2007), teachers are role models, and thus, should set a good example and have high EQ. The National Philosophy of Education (Ministry of Education, 2002) has emphasized on the needs for EQ to be developed in the students through the education system in Malaysia. Accordingly, teachers have an important role to play in producing high quality young generation instilled with good EQ (Zakiah, 2005). According to Telena (2000), a novice teacher’s EQ is challenged when receiving a new responsibility to conduct his or her own class. Novice teachers also have to cope with a new situation in building good relationships with other teachers as well as with school staff, parents and community. Moreover, there is a clear distinction between individuals who have high EQ and those with lower EQ. Individuals with high EQ are likely to be more healthy and successful. Furthermore, high EQ individuals are more confidence, have initiative to solve problems, possess good thinking ability and have clear goals to be
achieved (Cooper, 1997). According to Goleman (1996), EQ is a person's ability to understand his own feelings and use them to make effective decisions in everyday life. Goleman also believes that high EQ allows one to better control the frustration, sadness and other negative feelings. A person with high EQ is also able to monitor his and other people’s emotions, able to distinguish between good and bad as well as is able to use the information to help others.

Zainatul (2011) states that a major challenge in today's teaching profession is to produce people who are knowledgeable, insightful, competent and have admirable personality as outlined in the Philosophy of Education. As such, educators too are required to be knowledgeable, skillful and have high emotional strength. In fact, these are also the challenges faced by technical teachers in schools and lecturers in higher education institutions (Zainatul, 2011). A study by Noriah, Ramlee, Zuria and Siti Rahayah (2006) reveals that teachers in Malaysia have registered the highest emotional intelligence scores in the spiritual and self-regulation domains but very low in the domain of social skills. These findings are very interesting because, as teachers, it is important for them to have good social skills. If educators do not have the skills such as asking the students’ well-being, guiding, understanding and forgiving, teaching and learning process would be affected. In another study by Noriah, Siti Rahayah and Syed Najmuddin (2003), it is found that age and experience play an important role in influencing the level of EQ among teachers. The study reports that there are some teachers who say that they were very “strict”, impatient and were likely to reprimand problematic students. However, as these teachers have become older, they have become more matured and shown some patience when dealing with particularly problematic students. EQ is indeed closely related to job satisfaction among teachers when they are at workplace.

Locke (1969, 1976) defines job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences". This statement is also supported by Gruneberg (1979) who states that job satisfaction has become the central focus due to the general perception that job satisfaction can increase productivity and bring many other benefits to the organization. Job satisfaction is a measuring tool to determine the success of an organization. Galpin (1996) has identified ten elements which collectively form the organizational culture; (1) rules and policies, (2) goals and measurement, (3) customs and norms, (4) training, (5) events and occasions, (6) management behavior, (7) rewards and recognition, (8) community, (9) physical environment, and (10) organizational structure. The current challenges faced by teachers require them to equip themselves with all sorts of knowledge, acquire better skills, adhere to teachers’ code of ethics and have a high level of social skills. These features are very important in order to achieve career satisfaction, and thus enable them to provide a strong commitment in fulfilling the duties and responsibilities (Zainatul, 2011). According to Abdul Shukur (1996), there are various perceptions and claims related to the teaching profession today. Some members of the public have the impression that the work load and the duties teachers have to perform do not make teaching as an attractive career option. Some people, in fact, see schools as an organization that is bombarded with a variety of workload in which at times appeared from unexpected situations. This proves that teaching is regard as a very challenging profession. However, if this situation continues, teaching and learning will certainly fail to achieve the desired goals.

A study by Anida (2000) shows that 76.3 % teachers have expressed their dissatisfaction towards the profession due to the heavy workload they have to perform daily. Apart from teaching, teachers are also directly involved in a number of activities outside of school such as extra-curricular, sports and extra classes. Amla Mohd Salleh (1994) has noted that the phenomenon of teachers deciding to take an early retirement is often associated with the changes in the curriculum introduced in the Malaysian education system. The change is said to have caused the list of chores to be getting longer and teachers are pressured with higher expectations while the other conditions remain unchanged. Job satisfaction can be achieved if an individual loves his career and at the same time is provided with conducive surroundings, career stability and clear achievable goals (Amla Mohd Salleh, 1994). Zainatul (2011) summarizes that work load is one of the factors that influence job satisfaction among technical teachers. A technical teacher is not only expected to be involved in classroom teaching and learning activities, but also on the use of laboratories, tools and machines that require high levels of safety surveillance. In addition, laboratory teaching preparation must be done adequately and cannot be done half-heartedly, or else, teaching objectives will not be achieved. Unlike science subjects, technical teachers are not provided with
laboratory assistants. Thus, it can be seen that technical teachers have a heavy and bigger role to fulfill in producing quality human capital. According to Locke (1976), job dissatisfaction could lead an individual to be absent from work, quit his job, delay in handling complaints, unproductive, tend to leave the office quickly, and spend more time during breaks. Recognizing this fact, an important aspect that needs to be emphasized is the ability to manage his emotional intelligence in facing challenges in his career. A study conducted by Mohd. Najib (2002) has shown that for learning to be more effective, high EQ among teachers is vital. Therefore, there is a need for this research to be conducted as it will allow us to see how EQ could contribute to job satisfaction among vocational college teachers and thus help to ensure the technical and vocational education transformational plan launched by the government be implemented smoothly.

**Research Questions**

Four research questions have been identified in this study. The research questions are; (1) What is the EQ level among teachers in vocational colleges in the Southern Zone?, (2) What is the job satisfaction level among teachers in vocational colleges in the Southern Zone? (3) Do demographic factors affect the teachers’ EQ level?, and (4) To what extent does EQ contribute to the teachers’ job satisfaction?

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted to see whether there was a relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. The researchers also wanted to see if there were differences in the level of emotional intelligence of the respondents according to demographics. A total of 182 technical teachers from various vocational colleges from the southern zone took part in this study. The colleges involved were Johor Vocational College, Datuk Seri Mohd Zin, Malacca Vocational College and Dato ‘Maharaja Lela Negeri Sembilan Vocational College. Based on the Krejcie and Morgan’s table (1970), a total of 123 technical teachers would be sufficient to get the confidence level. Out of 182 sets of questionnaires distributed, 138 were returned.

**THEORY OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EQ)**

EQ includes; self-control, determination and persistence, the ability to motivate oneself and to deal with failure, the ability to manage one’s instinct and emotion, not exaggerating on pleasures, ability to manage one’s mood, ensuring that stress will not affect the ability to read other people's feelings and pray to maintain the good relationships, and the ability to lead and resolve conflicts (Mohd Azhar, 2004). In this study, three models of emotional intelligence will be presented; Reuven Bar-On (EQ-i) Model, Mayer and Salovey’s 4 Branch Model and Goleman Model (ECI).

**Mayer and Salovey’s 4 Branch Model**

In 1997, Mayer and Salovey have brought a new dimension in Educational Evaluation by introducing the EQ term to the world. Due to this, many experts believe that human activity is not only dependent on his intellectual intelligence (IQ), but the decisions he makes also depend on the EQ. Mayer and Salovey (1997) have become the early psychologists who unlock the specific meaning of EQ. According to them, EQ refers to "the ability to perceive, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (Mayer and Salovey, 1997). Mayer and Salovey (1997) further state that EQ allows us to think more creatively and to use emotions to solve problems. EQ also refers to a person's ability to monitor his own feelings and emotions as well as others’. The model proposed by Mayer and Salovey EQ is divided into four "; the ability to identify emotions and to express them appropriately, the ability to constructively use emotions in making decisions, the ability to understand the various emotions, and an increase in the personal and social aspects.

**Reuven Bar-On Model (EQ-i)**

Reuven Bar-On is a psychologist who investigates the EQ field. He has developed the Emotional Intelligence Competency Inventory Model, a measurement method used to assess and validate an individual’s dependency results. This method aims to identify a person's non-cognitive skills that cause a person to be successful in his lives (Mohd Azhar, 2004). Moreover, the main purpose of this method is to evaluate the quality of an individual’s ability to effectively control his emotions. This method is commonly used for employee selection process and career development. Bar-On, R. (2004) has defined
EQ as a set of abilities, competencies, and non-cognitive competencies, which affects one’s ability to successfully cope with the demands and pressure. Bar-On, in his model, has presented five EQ domains that are; Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Stress Management, Reconciliation and General Feelings.

**Goleman Model**
Goleman (1998) has defined EQ as the ability to control and organize oneself and others in terms of feelings, emotions and behavior. It is also an ability to modify one’s behavior according to the time and situations. Goleman (1995) has stated that the assessment of an individual is not only based on the intelligence available on his IQ, but more importantly is the EQ he possessed. Goleman (1999), through his theory, has presented five domains that include Self Awareness, Self-Regulation, Self Motivation, Empathy and Social skills.

**THEORY OF JOB SATISFACTION**
According to Davis (1987), motivation is the driving force for an employee to perform an action. Motivation refers to an individual’s needs to achieve internal and external desires. The relationship between the needs of individuals towards performance is summarized in Davis Motivation Model (1987). Individual needs cause a person to strive harder so that the incentives offered by the employer could be attained. Davis Motivation Model describes how motivation will make someone to work towards achieving his motives. Several motivation theories related to job satisfaction are Herzberg’s Two Factor Theory, Lawler’s Facet Satisfaction Model Theory and Locke’s Theory of Value (1976).

**HERZBERG’S TWO-FACTOR THEORY**
Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory (1968) takes into account the aspects of motivation and job satisfaction. Herberg has categorized human desires into two; motivator and hygiene desires. Motivator is the desire that motivates the employee to achieve a high performance work. This desire includes the internal characteristics of a task such as achievement, recognition, the nature of the work itself, responsibility and success. Hygiene, on the other hand, is the desire associated with an individual’s well-being within his working environment. This could include the policy of the organization, supervision, salary, relationships with the superiors as well as with the subordinates and colleagues, employment status, working conditions and job security. Inefficient administrative system, lack of appropriate reward and recognition schemes and some other factors may cause the employee to perform poorly and lead to job dissatisfaction.

**LOCKE’S THEORY OF VALUE**
The theory tries to explain how job satisfaction is related to the way an individual perceives to what extent his work could provide the needs, desires and values required. Thus, an individual is seen to have clear goals, such as task-related job performance standards, to be achieved in his work. According to Locke (1976), as work involves emotional satisfaction, the value of an aspect of the work can help the person to experience job satisfaction. Whether the individual has achieved a certain level of satisfaction is based on his assessment on how his work ability has allowed him to achieve his set values. Thus, while individuals regard the values as an importance aspect of their work, individual value hierarchy is not static and changes depending on circumstances.

**MASLOW’S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS THEORY**
Abraham Maslow (1970) has highlighted the needs in the form of a hierarchical pyramid based on the importance of lower level basic needs and higher level needs. The lower level basic needs include physiological needs, safety and security as well as the needs for love and belonging. Higher level needs, on the other hand, consist of esteem needs and self-actualization needs. If these needs are considered and provided in a working environment, efforts towards meeting these needs can increase job commitment among employees.

**RESEARCH DISCUSSION**
Of the 138 questionnaires collected, 63 (46%) respondents were female and 75 (54%) were male teachers. 67 (48%) respondents were between 31 and 40 years old, 36 (26%) were between 41 and 50 years old, 30
(22%) were between 20 and 30 years old. The remaining 5 (4%) respondents were between 41 and 50 years old. As for academic qualifications, a total of 136 (99%) respondents were first degree holders and the other two (1%) respondents had their master's degree. In addition, 61 (44%) teachers had 11 to 20 years of working experience, 53 (39%) had between 21 to 30 years of experience and another 10 (7%) had been working for 5 to 10 years. An equal number of 7 (5%) of the respondents had 1 to 5 years and 31 to 40 years of working experience, respectively.

**DISCUSSION ON THE RESPONDENTS’ LEVEL OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

The analysis reveals that the respondents scored a moderate level of EQ in the following domains; self-awareness, the ability to manage own emotions, empathy and social skills. However, the teachers scored a high level of EQ for the motivation element. These findings are further strengthened by a study by Azizi et al. (2006), who found that a teacher should be equipped with motivation skills to further develop his potential and thus helping the needy students. According to Gardner (1983), each individual is able to recognize his strengths and weaknesses. This ability allows the person to have high self-confidence, be able to realize his self-potential, be able to determine his goals in life, and have a strong principle and determination in life. The findings have shown that the respondents recorded the lowest mean score and thus a moderate level in the element of self-consciousness compared to the other elements. The findings, therefore, contradict to Goleman’s study (1999) which states that individuals who have self-control are able to compose them self and temporarily suspend their negative feelings. Such individuals are also said to be able to quickly recover from emotional distress. This study also finds that the EQ of technical teachers from the southern zone was at a moderate level, opposing the findings by the study by Mohd Najib (2002). This proves that high EQ among teachers is very important in the process of consultation with the students so that learning becomes more effective.

**DISCUSSION ON THE LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS’ JOB SATISFACTION**

The results have shown that the level of job satisfaction among the technical teachers was at a moderate level. According to Locke (1976), job satisfaction is a positive emotional excitement directly resulted from the recognition received or the experience gained while working. Locke (1976) states that, as job satisfaction involves emotion, the value of an aspect of work can help in terms of satisfaction experienced. An individual’s job satisfaction is achieved based on an assessment on his ability to meet the value of his work. Individuals rely on the value and the importance on their work. At the same time, the hierarchy of an individual’s value is not static and changes according to circumstances. The study also shows that there was a significant relationship between EQ and job satisfaction among the respondents where the significant value of EQ with job satisfaction was 0.803 (which was bigger than 0.05) and thus rejecting the researcher’s null hypothesis of no significant relation between the two variables. Generally, there was a positive relationship, in which the study’s Pearson correlation value was statistically high. This suggests that respondents had effectively used EQ in achieving job satisfaction. This result is consistent with a study done by Abraham (2000) which states that social skills, an element in EQ, cause people to achieve success in the workplace. Positive interpersonal relationships with other people will enhance a person's job satisfaction and indirectly help to reduce stress in the workplace. Individuals with high EQ can avoid work stress, thus are able to achieve job and organization satisfaction. This study is also in line with a study conducted by Noor Azzuddin (1990) which believes that job satisfaction is an important aspect in teaching profession. His study has indicated that a high level of EQ enables the teachers to manage work stress and helps them to be happy and satisfied with the work done.

**DISCUSSION ON THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE LEVEL DIFFERENCES BASED ON GENDER**

The analysis conducted reveals that there was a significant different on the levels of EQ among the male teachers as opposed to the female teachers. The significance level was set at the 0.05 (5%), whereas, the significant value obtained was 0.000. Therefore, the hypothesis that states there is no EQ difference based on gender was rejected. This finding is supported by a study conducted by Liew er Al (2002) which states that the levels of EQ between men and women are different.
This finding is also in line with a study by Antoniou, et. al. (2006), in which female teachers tend to have higher work stress compared to the male teachers. The stress experienced by female teachers due to excessive workload is also affecting their personal and family life. The condition of working environment is also said to be one of the causes for female teachers to feel stressed. However, studies by Nik Azizi (2007), Chua (2004) and Mazeni Azizi (2005) have indicated that the workload faced by male teachers and female teachers is the same. A study by Cavallo & Brienza (2001), however, has shown that female workers have higher emotional competence in adaptability, service orientation, self-awareness, communication, and are more meticulous and willing to help others. The male workers, on the other hand, have a high emotional competence in catalyst for change.

Many other previous studies have also shown that there are differences in terms of EQ domains and gender. Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 1999). According to Carr (2004), different genders have different EQ. Men, for example, have shown higher level in the intrapersonal domain involving stress management, adaptability, considerate, flexibility, intelligent, problem solving and stress control and are more optimistic compared to women. Women, on the other hand, have higher scores in the interpersonal domain where they are more aware of their emotions, show more empathy and are more responsible than men. According to Jenkins (1991), women who suffer from stress can be seen through the grief experienced, unstable emotionally, and so on. Whereas, men who suffer from stress usually suffer diseases such as heart disease and cirrhosis.

Garboau et. al. (2001) have found that job satisfaction between men and women is not much different. Through a series of studies in 1988, 1989, 1990 and 1991, data have indicated that women are more satisfied with work compared to men. A significant gap in terms of job satisfaction can be seen in 1990 in which 53.85% female workers were satisfied with their work compared to male workers (46.15%). In addition, the study also assesses the respondents’ satisfaction on their rest time. Break time is unpaid activity (McConnell et. al., 2003). The data collected have indicated that men were more satisfied with their rest time compared to women. This indicates that workers who are satisfied with their jobs are less satisfied with their time off and vice versa.

**DISCUSSION ON THE DIFFERENCES IN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE LEVEL BASED ON AGE**

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the respondents’ EQ had no significant relationship with age. Every individual regardless of age has the opportunity to have a high level of EQ. Age did not affect their EQ level where respondents could acquire a high EQ was when they grow older, their emotional maturity is also improved. The findings by Ishak et. al., (2003), have shown that there were some teachers who said that when they were young, they were very strict and impatience. However as they became older, they have become more matured and have more patient in dealing with problematic students.

Study by Carr (2004) which states that EQ is correlated with age. Middle age people (those who are 40 to 50 years old) have higher EQ level compared to those younger and older people. In addition, high EQ level individuals tend to have better mental health compared to low EQ level individuals where their mental health is more complicated. Studies by Goleman (1998) and Bar-On (2000) have shown that there are differences in terms of age and the domains found in the EQ.

The study by Antoniou et. al., (2006) has shown that younger teachers are experiencing higher stress and are easily "burnt-out". This is because, in the early years of work, these teachers have given their full energy and effort in achieving the set educational objectives. At the same time, the pressure is said to be increasing in tandem with the work done. As a result, these young teachers are at a higher risk for mental health problems.

**DISCUSSION ON DIFFERENCES IN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE LEVEL BASED ON WORKING EXPERIENCE**

The current research has revealed that the technical teachers’ EQ level is correlated with their working experience. This finding is supported by a study by Iskandar et al. (2009) which shows that there is a difference in the EQ scores based on work experience. Through the experience gained by the respondents,
the researchers believe that the teachers will have a high EQ regardless of their working as they have been facing with many challenges and ups and downs in the teaching profession. Thus, they are able to effectively control themselves when dealing with the educational transformation. This finding, in fact, is in line with the findings of previous studies which state that there is a difference between working experience in the domain of EQ (Crick, 2002; Fernandez-Aaroz, 2001; Cherniss & Goleman, 2005).

CONCLUSION
The results have indicated that EQ plays an important role in education and it should be implemented as soon as possible. In this regard, educators, including the technical teachers should emphasize the importance of EQ while performing their duties. According to Goleman (1995), there is a need for schools to educate students on ways to achieve a high level of EQ so that they can manage their emotions effectively. In addition, educators should become the role models in the construction of students’ EQ by demonstrating qualities such as caring and courteous when interacting with them. From this study we know that EQ is positively correlated with job satisfaction. Goleman (1998) explains that an organization that practices EQ-based management principles focusing on humanistic development will be able to retain the workers due to the job satisfaction. The workers are also likely to give their full cooperation and commitment to the organization. Previous studies have also proven that a person who possesses high EQ level is more matured and is more efficient in managing emotions, motivated and is able to show more empathy.

REFERENCES


