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THE INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON WORK PERFORMANCE AMONG HEALTH STAFF

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Abstract

Work performance has become a major focus in most organizations as the world of work is undergoing massive changes everyday. The purpose of this study is to identify the influence of emotional intelligence on work performance among health staff in a Hospital located in Selangor, Malaysia. This study involves 101 respondents which was chosen through convenience sampling. The quantitative data collected through Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EIQ) and Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) were analysed by using multiple linear regression. The result shows that the health staff have a moderate level of emotional intelligence with high level of work performance. The results also indicates that self-awareness, self-management and social skill were significantly influence work performance, whereas social- awareness does not have a significant influence on work performance among health staff. These findings suggest that hospital administrators should be aware that low emotional intelligence can result in lower work performance among health staff. Thus, an effective intervention should address the emotional intelligence among health staff in order to improve their work performance.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, work performance, self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, social-skill

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■ 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The world of career nowadays keeps changing rapidly on a daily basis same goes with companies and employees who work for them. Due to the increasing technology, delivery speed, and the expansion of the service sector has increased demands on high work performance. To deliver the best work performance, people nowadays are being required to be more energetic in their work, not only physically but also mentally (Flaxman, Bond & Livheim, 2013). In order to stay competitive and maintain competitiveness, organizations place a continuous pressure on their employees to do their job. This pressure is clearly evident in the work environment of employees in a public hospital where communication skills are needed, and patient's satisfaction issues is huge. According to (Zysberg & Raz, 2019) Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the ability to manage and control one's emotions. It's all about one's ability to manage and control their own emotions under difficult circumstances. EI is vital since it firmly connects to the positive outcomes in environment. People who have higher EI usually will be more adaptable to any changes and due to our fast improvement of digital-age, having higher EI is a must. For example, leaders who have higher EI most probably will have happier employees who willing to stay working in the company which will decrease the cost of attrition and increase productivity of the company. This "scenario" was proven by Alonazi, (2020) who found that nurses with higher EI significantly outperformed other nurses, and that EI is a significant predictor of higher achievement or better job performance.

According to Cherry, Doyle and Romanelli (2006), EI is the capacity to see, control and evaluate sentiments and capacity to perceive their own emotions and the sentiment of others individuals and most ordinarily incorporates the ideas of emotional expression and regulation, empathy and self-awareness. In addition, people who have lower EI are most likely to have poor physical, mental health and struggling to cope with stress (Batool, 2011). EI has a strong connection with outsiders' ability to cope with the pressures of their environment. Previous studies have shown that people with different levels of EI prefer different coping strategies. Higher EI links will lead to higher life satisfaction, good problem-solving skills and better stress coping strategy (Estelle, B. 2009). However, lower EI may lead to various of negative outcomes in workplace especially the work performance of an individual.

According to Pinos Twigg, Parayitam and Olson (2013) poor work performance was significantly related to lower EI among workers. Work performance contains the noticeable practices that individuals carry out in their occupations that are relevant to the organization goals. Moreover, work performance become the main interest to organizations because of the importance of high productivity in the workplace and it determines the organizational achievements (Schyns & Schilling, 2013). Basically, work performance is not just the result of behaviour, but rather the behaviour itself. In other words, performance contains behaviours' of employees in the workplace which is likely to be influenced by the emotional condition of employees.

An interesting argument in the literature on the topic of EI is that emotionally intelligent people are uniquely valued human assets compared to emotionally unstable persons (Goleman, 1995). This claim has prompted researchers to investigate the extent to which this statement is true. From that point forward, most studies have been conducted to provide empirical evidence supporting this claim by establishing the relationship between EI and work performance that is of particular organization interest. However, it is said that this claim has not been adequately investigated. The ability of specific components of EI to predict outcomes and other workplace behaviour requires further

research (Joseph, Newman & O'Boyle, 2015). As an employee, having a good work performance is very crucial in order for a company to achieve their organization goal. A research by Dhani, Sehrawat, and Sharma (2016) found the positive correlation between employees' Job Performance and EI. The study also found that employees with high EI are greater at work, punctual, accurate, and more competent as compared those who scored low on EI.

However, having a poor work performance in an organization may damage the organization production, reputation and others. Thus, most past studies tend to explore the predictors of work performance as it is essential to any organization. A conducted by Gong, Chen and Wang (2019); Hingnekar and Ahmed (2016); Osro, Nasution and Sadalia (2018); Ackon (2012) emphasize on the relationship between EI and work performance and the outcome indicate reliable information whereby the relationship between EI and work performance is positively significant (Vasudevan, 2013). Although most literature has focusing the relationship between EI and work performance in different working sector, there still some studies which found that both variable were significantly related in the health care settings (Alsufyani, Aboshaiqah, Alshehri, & Alsufyani, 2022; Alonazi, 2020).

Health staff always dealing with a wide variety of patients and jobs every day. They are assigned to provide healthcare service for their patients, work closely with other professionals in order to provide patients with exceptional care and much more. In addition, they also faced a lot of problems such as they need to work extra hours if there's an emergency case, dealing with different types of clients, which eventually may lead them to stress and exhaustion both mentally, emotionally and physically. This causes them to be exposed to stress which can affect their work performance. Therefore, they need a high level of EI to ensure that they are able to handle the stress they are facing so that it does not affect their work performance. Therefore, a study on this matter needs to be further investigated by another researcher in another working sector. Thus, this research aims to identify the level of emotional intelligence and its influence on work performance among health staff in a public Hospital in Selangor, Malaysia.

■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "Emotional Intelligence" (EI) was introduced by psychologists Mayer and Salovey in 1990, which refers to an individual's ability to see and control emotional information precisely and adequately, both inside oneself and in others and to utilize the information to guide one's thinking and action and to impact those of others. However, according to Goleman (1995), EI is the ability of individuals to understand one's emotions, to organize them, to motivate them, to recognize others' emotions, and to maintain relationships with others. It describe a person's ability to recognize and interpret the components of emotions in a complex social relationship. In addition, EI contains 4 components which are social awareness, self-awareness, self-management, and social skill or relationship management (Goleman, 1995). Self-awareness was the most fundamental piece of the EI measurement whereby it very well may be characterized as the ability to comprehend one's own feeling. Having a significant level of self-awareness allows individuals to know about their quality, values, weaknesses and motives. Individuals who have high self-awareness are no doubt able to figure their own states of mind precisely and see how their temperaments can influence others.

According to (Goleman & Cherniss, 2001), self-management is the ability of an individual to control stressors such as anger, anxiety and to prevent emotional impulsivity. The third component of EI is social awareness which refers to understanding the thoughts, feelings, and other situations. It also includes understanding other people's situations, experiencing other people's emotions, and understanding their needs. individuals who have high empathy will most likely sense the feelings of others by appearing that they care and they are great at recognizing people's qualities, achievements, and advancement. The fourth component of EI is social-skill which means guiding other's emotion includes influencing others, supporting teamwork, beliefs and feelings, building strong personal bonds, managing change, resolving conflicts, leading by example, and developing others' capabilities. Individuals who have great social skills are acceptable at convincing others to share their vision and would consistently amplify their system of individuals to win their help when needed.

Work performance on the other hand involves the noticeable practices that people do in their occupations that are relevant to the goals of the organization (Alsufyani, 2022). There are many different concepts of work performance from different perspectives. One of the most establish concept were the three dimensions of work performance developed by Koopmans (2011) which are task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive behavior. Task performance refer to the competence or ability of a worker to perform core tasks according to their position in an organization. Whereas contextual performance is the extra practices and activities outside of the primary assignments that help the association including the abilities to play out extra errands, have activity, take on testing undertakings, create information and aptitudes (Koopmans, 2011). These dimensions include the ability to plan and organize tasks, results- oriented, work quality and capabilities to work efficiently. Next, the counterproductive work behaviors indicate differences in behaviors that are relevant to organizational goals. This is the only dimension which contradict with the other two dimension. It covers most of the behaviors that range from negative values to the negative behaviors that counter the productivity and achievement in workplace (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000). Such behaviour include complaining, taking actions that harm the organization, misusing information, abusing time and resources, unsafe behavior, and poor work quality.

Previous studies tend to investigate the multiple predictors of work performance in order to reduce the risk of an organization having a low productive worker. A study conducted by Hingnekar, and Ahmed (2016) aims to analyze the influence of emotional intelligence on job performance among employees working in banking sector. The primary data was gathered by using a questionnaire from 80 employees working in the banking sector. The result shows that EI is highly correlated to job performance. Another study by Mahphoth, Krishnan, Ahmad and A'yudin (2018) among 110 specialists that are working in a chosen oil and gas industry in Malaysia also found that there is a positive significant relationship between self-management and employee job performance. In the healthcare context, a study conducted by Osro, Nasution and Sadalia (2018) which aim to analyzed the influence of emotional intelligence which consists of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills on the performance among health officer in North Sumatera, Indonesia, found that there is a positive significance relationship between emotional intelligence and work performance among health officer. In which relationship were strong and positive in nature. The current studies also support the significant cause and effect relationship between these two variables especially among health staff such as nurses (Alsufyani et. al., 2022; Alonazi, 2020; Wang, Lin, Chen, Wang, Peters, & Lin, 2023). Based from the result in previous studies, the current study assumes that there is a positive and significant influence of emotional intelligence on work performance.

■ 3.0 METHODOLOGY

In this research, the quantitative and cross-sectional research design was used to analyse the influence of emotional intelligence on work performance as the data from the respondent were collected all at once by using questionnaires. The research population was the health staff in one of the most important public Hospital in Selangor. A total of 101 respondents has been chosen through convenience sampling. The sampling method were more suitable to get enough sample in limited time and cost effective especially among health staff who have a busy and important work schedule most of the time. The independent variable was measured by using Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire developed by Goleman (1995,1998). The questionnaire includes a total of 15 items which consists of 4 dimensions, namely social awareness, self-awareness, self-management and social skill/relationship management. According to Goleman (1995, 1998) the reliability for assessing emotion scale is 0.87 and scale also showed a strong convergent validity. Next, the work performance in this study was measured using Koopman (2011) Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ). The questionnaire includes a total of 18 items measuring three components which are task performance, contextual performance and counterproductive work behavior. The reliability of this scale is 0.82 which is considered as good based on (Aiken, 1985). The scale used for both questionnaires are 5-point Likert scale starting from 1 'strongly disagree' until 5 'strongly agree. In this study, the data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software version 23.0. Descriptive analysis such as mean, frequency, and percentage were used to measure the level of EI among the respondents. Moreover, inferential statistics which is multiple regression were used to analyse the influence of emotional intelligence on work performance among health staff.

■ 4.0 FINDINGS

Demographic Analysis

The questionnaires were distributed online to health staff employee who are currently work in a public Hospital. A total of 110 respondents has answered the questionnaire which consist of 62 female staff and 39 male staff. 26.9% of the respondent are on the range age of 21-30. Meanwhile, 48.7% are in the range of 31-40 years old followed by 22% at 41-50 years old and 3% in the range of 51-60 years old. As for the race, 40.6% from the total of respondent are Malay, 20.8% are Chinese and 38.6% are Indian. Besides, the duration of employment of the respondents also was taken. It was found that 8.9% of the total respondent has worked for 0-1 year followed by 45.5% who has worked for 2-4 years. Meanwhile 21.8% of total respondent has worked for 5-10 years and 23.8% has worked for 10 years and above.

Level of Emotional Intelligence

Table 4.1 shows the level of emotional intelligence on each components. The level of self- management and social-awareness were moderate with the mean value of 3.10 and 3.49 respectively. It was found that, the level of emotional intelligence on self-awareness and social skill components is high with the mean value is 4.30 and 3.97 respectively. The overall mean value of emotional intelligence is (M=3.60) which indicated that the health staff in the public hospital have a moderate level of emotional intelligence. Self-management was found to be the lowest level among health staff compared to the other dimensions of EI.

Table 4.1: Level of emotional intelligence

		U	
Dimension	Mean	SD	Level
Self-Management	3.10	.553	Moderate
Social-Awareness	3.82	.594	Moderate
Self-Awareness	4.30	.305	High
Social Skills	3.97	.624	High
Overall EI	3.62	.376	Moderate

Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Work Performance

Table 4.2 shows the result from multiple regression analysis on the influence of EI on work performance. It was found that EI is significantly related to the work performance with the value (R = 0.876, p < 0.05). Further analysis shows that EI strongly explain the changes of variance of work performance by 77% (R = 0.768, p < 0.05).

Table 4.2: Multiple regression analysis

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Din	nension	Beta	P-value	
Self	f-Management	0.185	0.04	
Soc	ial-Awareness	0.078	0.10	
Self	f-Awareness	0.279	0.01	
Soc	ial Skills	0.657	0.00	
	R	0.876	0.00	
	\mathbb{R}^2	0.768	0.00	

Specifically, the result shows that self-awareness has a positive and significant influence on work performance in which the increase of one-unit of self-awareness will lead to increase of work performance by 0.279 units. The study also found that self-management has a

significant influence on work performance where the increase of one-unit of self-management will lead to the increase of work performance by 0.185 units. This study also indicates that social skill has a positive and a significant influence on work performance which means that, the increase of one-unit of social-skill will lead to increase of work performance by 0.657 units. Finally, the unexpected finding of this study was that social-awareness does not have a significant influence on work performance as the P>0.05. Generally, this research found that most of the EI components has a positive and significant influence on work performance except for social awareness.

■ 5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of this study revealed that most of health staff have a moderate level of emotional intelligence. This implies that almost all respondents had a moderate and high level of emotional intelligence. This study also found that that the health staff have a high level in self-awareness and social-skills but only moderate level on self-management and social-awareness. According to Hajihasani, and Sim (2018) researcher who study EI believe that it was one of the human nature which can have important applications and affecting various human activities inside or outside of workplace. According to Alonazi (2020) most health staff in critical care units demonstrated the highest levels of EI, followed by nurses in intensive care, neonatal intensive care, then general nurses.

Therefore, there are few reasons why most of health staff have a moderate to high level of emotional intelligence. First, due to the post-pandemic nowadays, multiple job demands and challenging working condition has caused work overload for health staff which most likely make them feel stressed and this might be one of the factors that affect their emotional intelligence. In addition, the chosen hospital in this study also has been one of the main hospital in this country that responsible for handling the most serious cases of Covid-19 which in turn increases the job demands of health staff. From the data gathered, the researcher can conclude that the health staff have lower social-awareness compared to the other components of EI. This may due to the working condition which make them prefer to handle their personal or working problem alone rather than asking for help or share with their already busier workmates.

However, most health staff still have high level of EI on other components especially the self-awareness. Referring to the item of "I know my strengths and weaknesses", majority of the respondent strongly agree with the item. From the score of respondents on this statement, the researcher can conclude that health staff at the hospital were given enough training by the organization, which makes them more aware of themselves and their role in the workplace. In addition, they also scored high on social-skills which stated that the health care tend to avoid conflict and prefer to negotiate in handling a problem in order to maintain positive environment and good social relationship in the workplace. This result is in line with past studies conducted by Osro, Nasution and Sadalia (2018) which shows that better self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills simultaneously improve the working condition and improve employee's achievement. Having a good social-skills is vital because it act as a foundation for having positive relationship with others (Mohamad & Jais, 2016).

Other than that, the current study also found that most of the components of EI has significant and positive effect of work performance. The finding is in line with previous study by Chauhan and Kaul (2022) which implies that emotional awareness, emotional regulation, and managing of emotions are the significant components of EI which enhances interpersonal relationships and some aspects of Job Performance among health staff. The current study found that self-awareness has a positive influence on work performance. The finding is consistent with the study by Vasudevan (2013) which concluded that self-awareness has a positive and significant influences on employee's work commitment and performance in an organization. In addition, a study conducted by (Osro, Nasution, & Sadalia, 2018) also found that self-awareness had a positive influence on the work performance of the Health Department officers. Employee's work commitment and performance can be increased if they can identify their strengths and improve their weaknesses in workplace. According to Miao (2017) employees with high level of emotional intelligence perform well and have higher satisfaction with their jobs and they also build a good social support system for their partner. Having high self-awareness can improve a person's ability to manage their thoughts, behaviors, and emotion which indirectly lead to the increasing of work performance.

This study also found that self-management have a positive influence on work performance. The finding is consistent with the study by Vito (2018) where there is a strong significant positive relationship between self- management and employee performance. In addition Vasudevan (2013) also stated that self-management positively influences employee's work commitment and performance as they have better self-control and self-regulation such as trust, integrity, earnestness, adaptability, innovation and shouldering responsibility for one's own actions. This is aligned with the score obtained on this study where most of the respondent set long-term goals, and review their progress regularly which eventually lead to better work performance.

However, this study shows that social-awareness does not have positive influence on work performance. This is contradicted with past studies by Vasudevan (2013) which found that social awareness is positively influences employee's work commitment and performance. This finding is also differed with the study of Shahzad, Sarmand, Abbas and Khan (2011), which stated that social- awareness is positively related to employee's performance. There are few factors that might be contributed to this unexpected findings. For instance, the unhealthy workplace environment with high risk of being infected by pathogen in environment might be the reason why social-awareness is not significantly influence work performance of health staff especially during the rising number of Covid-19 patients. According to the International Labour Organization (2020) the pandemic has had a particularly dire impact on domestic workers around the world where many people lost their job and lack of social connection even as we move to post-pandemic era. This might be one of the reasons why health staff at the hospital put less emphasize on the social aspects as they focus more on their most important responsibility to cure and manage patients and become the important front liner of fighting the disease or pandemic.

Last but no least, this study found that social-skill have positive influence on work performance. The finding is in line with past studies such as Sarmand, Abbas and Khan (2011) which revealed that social-skills is positively influence employee's work performance. In addition, study by Vasudevan (2013) and Sunaryo (2018) also proven that social skills is positively influences employee's work commitment and performance. It shows that emotionally intelligent employees will consider his feelings and other employees' emotions as the basis for building relationships with colleagues. Managing relationships is about moving or guiding people to the right direction. Besides, social skills also create a more complex picture. Fundamentally, the relationship skills effectiveness is depending on the person's capability to adjust or influence other people's emotions. Based on the score obtained, majority of the respondent enjoy organizing groups and working in groups. This has proven that health staff have high social-skills or relationship management which make them work more effectively and perform better.

Recommendation and Conclusion

Based on the results of the study findings above, the researcher would like to suggest some recommendation that can be made as a guidance or follow-up action in the study on influence of emotional intelligence on work performance. This study can give a detailed picture of the emotional intelligence of health staff in public hospital. There are some limitations of the study that have been identified. The first limitation is that the respondents involve were not include any other health care institution especially the private hospital in Malaysia. Thus, the results of this current research might not be utilized to represent the whole population of health care provider in Malaysia. Based on this study, the researcher would like to suggest the future researcher to target larger population so that the result can be broaden to various health care provider organization. Next, the results of this study also show that there is significant influence of self-awareness, social-awareness and social-skill on work performance. However, this study found out that self-management does not have significant influence on work performance. The researcher would like to make recommendations for future researcher to carried out a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) research in order to gain more in depth data to prove the relationship between these two variables.

As a conclusion, the results of this study can contributions to the field of research on the influence of emotional intelligence on work performance. The ideas presented in this study can serve as references in conducting or furthering research related to this topic or testing the validity of other relevant findings. The information presented in this study will enable employee to act accordingly because through this research study, they will be able to see why having high emotional intelligence is important in improving their work performance. As for organization, through this research study, it may enable employers to see how important is emotional intelligence on their employees because employee with high emotional intelligence will contribute a lot in achieving organization goals than employees that have low emotional intelligence. The data provided will help them formulate a number of policies or intervention to help their employees to improve emotional intelligence and sustain a better work performance. These findings suggest that hospital administrators should be aware that low emotional intelligence characterized by lower self-awareness, self-management and social skills can result in lower work performance among health staff. Thus, an effective intervention should address the emotional intelligence among health staff in order to improve their work performance.

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