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# THE EFFECT OF STUDENT'S EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON SELF-LEADERSHIP IN MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY<sup>1</sup>

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## **Abstract**

*This study aims to investigate using quantitative approach the effect of student's emotional intelligence on self-leadership among Malaysian and international students in Malaysian public university. It also strives to examine whether student nationality plays a significant moderating role between emotional intelligence and self-leadership with 171 local and international students surveyed. Structural Equation Model through SmartPLS was used to know the effect and moderation. Findings of this study reported the direct-effect of student EQ on self-leadership and found significant moderation effect of student nationality between EQ (self-management) on self-leadership. The findings of this study were discussed and some suggestions, recommendations and implications were made for future studies' investigations and practices.*

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Self and Relationship Management, Self and Social Awareness, Self-leadership, Malaysian and International Students

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## **Introduction**

In today's world, especially in the workplace, emotional intelligence plays a big role in the career success. Academic success or achievement might not be enough to excel in today's workplace. As daily movement and transaction deals with humans, in order to be successful in dealing with people depends on our relationship with others and the ability to understand their emotions as well as respond to those emotions accordingly. The academic success and career endeavour are not predictable or causal. In the pursuit of student career growth study completion and survival in the industrial life, grooming students for leadership roles and equipping them with the necessary social skills are inevitable. Emotional intelligence might render a big help for students in their own self-awareness and others. Thus, students tend to appreciate others when they are able to appreciate themselves. Students likely be in charge of their learning and mastering skills as well as acknowledging their weaknesses with the help of self-management and awareness which eventually could improve their academic and social relationships. Students' interaction with other people could help students in developing a great personality and leadership. Students' IQ is well known in terms of academic intelligence and success, but EQ is seen as a gateway for success in the real world or at cooperate sectors. There is a long argument between scholars and researchers on the difference between emotional intelligence (EQ) and intelligence quotient (IQ) and, especially, the most important for the succession at the workplace. Some argued that, IQ is a key to getting a job while EQ is a key to surviving in the job. Authors and researchers in the field of psychology and educational leadership/management agreed on the vital roles that the EQ plays in individuals and organization when it comes to leadership, social skills and human relation.

## **Self-Leadership**

Practically, many past leadership research studies centralised on ways in which headship influences their subordinates<sup>2</sup> disregarding

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<sup>2</sup> Greg L. Steward, Stephen H. Courtright and Charles C. Manz, "Self-Leadership: A Multi-level Review," *Journal of Management* 37, no. 1 (2011): 185-222.

the fact that, self-leadership is the fundamental principle for effective leadership.<sup>3</sup> Leadership is not just an accomplishment, but a skill virtually required by everyone at all levels of organizations beginning with individuals managing themselves and at long last, acting as models for others. It is important that individuals must learn to manage themselves before they can successfully manage others; hence, individuals with self-leadership skills tends to possess a stronger commitment to their goals.<sup>4</sup> Studies have long established that, individual role performance can be characterized to an effective means that positively influence adaptability, proactivity and performance<sup>5</sup> as well as task proficiency.<sup>6</sup> Self-leadership as a concept is an extension of self-management, which, according to Topper<sup>7</sup> is the ability to decide where to go and how to go there; that is, having self-goal, initiative and believe that will support ones' growth and development. Instead of relying on external leaders for guidance, self-leaders set their own goals, monitors their own performances, motivate and when successful, reward themselves.<sup>8</sup> Self-leadership provides guidelines for individual personal regulations.

Self-leadership is a comprehensive thought of self-influence founded on the assumption that, individual behaviour is determined by a mental process, as a result of behavioural influence. That is, the process through which individual influences their thoughts and behaviour with the use of cognitive, affective and non- voluntary

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<sup>3</sup> Rebecca J. Reichard and Stefanie K. Johnson, "Leader Self-development as Organizational Strategy," *The Leadership Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (2011): 33-42; Steward, Courtright and Manz, "Self-Leadership: . . .

<sup>4</sup> Frances Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith and Richard Beckhard, "*The Leader of the Future. New Visions, Strategies, and Practices for the Next Era.*" (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> Christopher P. Neck and Jeffry D. Houghton, "Two Decades of Self-Leadership Theory and Research: Past Developments, Present Trends and Future possibilities," *A Journal of Managerial Psychology* 21, no. 4 (2006): 270-295.

<sup>6</sup> Kristina Hauschildt and Udo Konrad, "Self-leadership and Team Members' Work Role Performance," *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 27, no. 5 (2012): 497-517.

<sup>7</sup> Elisa F. Topper, "Self-leadership: Road to Personal Excellence," *New Library World* 110, no. 11/12 (2009): 561-563.

<sup>8</sup> Hauschildt and Konrad, "Self-leadership. . . ; Neck and Houghton, "Two Decades of Self-leadership Theory . . .

processes to achieve desirable outcomes through self-motivation and self-direction.<sup>9</sup> According to Boss and Sims,<sup>10</sup> it is a common belief that success is attained after a continuous failure without loss of enthusiasm, hence self-leadership and emotional intelligence regulates students' recovery from failure and progress in their work through teaching and counselling. Relatively, the importance of emotion in the process of making decisions, negotiations and interpersonal behaviour cannot be overemphasized. Emotional intelligence, according to the Boss and Sims is the ability to accurately evaluate and perceive self-emotion and that of others in the expression of face or tone of voice with the capability of transmitting such thoughtfulness to pattern of messages associated with the actions. These sets of abilities could help someone to improve his or her self-leadership while having the skills to deal with people's emotions. In addition, these abilities obtained from EQ equip students with the understanding skills of people's feelings, managing people's attitudes and behaviours and self-emotion regulation and others' to further enhance a pleasant one. This is due to the process of self-leadership that is known to help some individuals to identify themselves, improve self-control, and experience cognitive and emotional states that help them endure difficulties and stay energetic.

Through empirical observation, self-leadership has been characterized by Neck and Manz<sup>11</sup> as a multi-dimensional construct having secondary factors which constitute some specific behavioural patterns and strategies required for the control of individual

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<sup>9</sup> Marco R. Furtner and John. F. Rauthmann, "The Socioemotionally Intelligent Leader: Examining Relations Between Self-Leadership and Socioemotional Intelligence." *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal* 38, no. 9 (2010): 1191-1196; Christopher P. Neck and Charles C. Manz, *Mastering Self-leadership: Empowering Yourself for Personal Excellence*, 6th Edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall, 2010); Park Yukyung, Song J. Hoon and Lim D. Hun, "Organizational Justice and Work Engagement: The Mediating Effect of Self-leadership," *Leadership and Organizational Development Journal* 37, no. 6 (2016): 711-729.

<sup>10</sup> Alan D. Boss and Henry P. Sims Jr, "Everyone Fails!: Using Emotion Regulation and Self-leadership for Recovery," *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 23, no. 2 (2008):135-150, doi.org/10.1108/02683940810850781.

<sup>11</sup> Neck and Manz, *Mastering Self-leadership* . . .



behaviour and thought, intended to increase their performance and personal effectiveness. The construct of self-leadership evolved from early self-influence motivational theories like *self-determination* theory which proposed that, individuals are intrinsically driven by the need for personal growth and self-regulation which trigger goal directed behaviour;<sup>12</sup> *social exchange* theory explains that, peoples' perpetual experience of fairness are determined by the comparison between social rewards expected and what is received in reality.<sup>13</sup> It further finds its root in intrinsic motivation theory, drawing heavily on the related research streams of self-regulation, self-management and self-control.<sup>14</sup>

Self-leadership theory further provides a more comprehensive framework for the enactment and application of self-development, prescribing specific behavioural and cognitive strategies that contribute to successful leadership. These strategies according to Neck and Manz<sup>15</sup>; Sims and Manz<sup>16</sup> include behaviour-focused strategies, natural reward strategies and thought-pattern strategies. Behaviour-focused strategies which comprise of self-observation, self-goal setting, self-reward, self-punishment and self-cueing are designed to assist individuals in the management of behaviours and facilitating self-awareness required to achieve their goals.<sup>17</sup> The second scheme - natural reward strategies focus on incorporating positive, enjoyable and pleasant aspects of activities with a task of shifting attention away from the unpleasant features, which leads to enhance achievement and motivation.<sup>18</sup> Thus, individuals have a

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<sup>12</sup> Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior* (New York: Plemun Press, 1985).

<sup>13</sup> George C. Homans, "Social Behaviour as Axchange," *American Journal of Sociology* 63, no. 6 (1958): 597-606.

<sup>14</sup> Neck and Houghton, "Two Decades of Self-leadership . . .

<sup>15</sup> Neck and Manz, *Mastering Self-leadership* . . .

<sup>16</sup> Henry Sims and Charles C. Manz, *Company of Heroes: Unleashing the Power of Self-leadership* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1996).

<sup>17</sup> Park Yukyung, Song J. Hoon and Lim D. Hun, "Organizational Justice and Work Engagement . . .

<sup>18</sup> Jeffrey D. Houghton and Christopher P. Neck, "The Revised Self-leadership Questionnaire: Testing A Hierarchical Factor Structure for Self-leadership," *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 17, no. 8 (2002): 672-691; Neck and Houghton, "Two Decades of Self-leadership Theory . . ."; Neck and Manz, *Mastering Self-leadership* .

strong sense of competence and self-control when they perform tasks well. Lastly, thought-pattern strategies are aimed at building positive patterns and constructive habits into individuals' perception, thought and behaviour in order to foster optimism. Neck and Manz,<sup>19</sup> Park et al.,<sup>20</sup> viewed constructive thought pattern strategies as a means of distinguishing and substituting dysfunctional beliefs and assumptions by practicing mental imagery and using positive self-talk among individuals. It therefore intended to help individuals improve their effectiveness by developing a positive way of thinking.

Together with, effective leadership relies on the ability to proactively and reactively manage emotions. Some strong emotional components like an appraisal and recognition of emotions in others, studying individual personality and differences, understanding and managing own mood and that of others is said to predict effective leadership.<sup>21</sup> However, considerable research studies have shown that emotional intelligence and self-leadership positively influences individual performance, productivity, innovative behaviour and learning culture.<sup>22</sup>

Edelman and Knippenberg<sup>23</sup> assessed emotional intelligence in relation to leadership effectiveness and found in their study that,

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<sup>19</sup> Neck and Manz, *Mastering Self-leadership* . . .

<sup>20</sup> Park Yukyung, Song J. Hoon and Lim D. Hun, "Organizational Justice and Work Engagement . . .

<sup>21</sup> Abraham Carmeli, Meyrav Yitzhak-Halevy and Jacob Weisberg, "The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Wellbeing," *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 24, no. 1 (2009): 66-78; Daan van Knippenberg and Gerben A. Van Kleef, "Leadership and Affect: Moving the Hearts and Minds of Followers," *The Academy of Management Annals* 10, no. 1(2016):799-840.

<sup>22</sup> Kamal Birdi and et. al., "The Impact of Human Resource and Operational Management Practices on Company Productivity: A Longitudinal Study," *Personnel Psychology* 61, no. 3 (2008): 467-501; Abraham Carmeli, Ravit Meitar and Jacob Weisberg, "Self-Leadership Skills and Innovative Behaviour at Work," *International Journal of Manpower* 27, no. 1 (2006): 75-90; Park Yukyung & Song Y, "The Effect of Self-efficacy on the Relationship between Employees' Self-leadership Strategies and Building A Learning Organization," *Journal of Korean HRD Research* 5, no. 4 (2010):115-132; Gregory E. Prussia, Joe S. Anderson and Charles C. Manz, "Self-leadership and Performance Outcomes: The Mediating Influence of Self-efficacy," *Journal of Organizational Behaviour* 19, no. 5 (1998): 523-538.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Edelman and Daan van Knippenberg, "Emotional Intelligence, Management

the appropriateness of one's response to others' emotions is predicted by emotional intelligence and it further controls for cognitive ability. This was corroborated in other studies where it was established that, emotionally intelligent individuals are able to maintain a positive intellectual level due to their ability to effectively manage, regularise, generate and promote their emotions.<sup>24</sup> It could be said from the aforementioned that, individuals with high emotional intelligence display emotion that are more appropriate to situations and further respond more appropriately to people's emotional expression. Although there are many past studies on self-leadership and emotional intelligence, nevertheless, as mentioned before, more empirical evidences are still needed to determine the importance of these two variables, especially, when there are little or no research that combine the constructs in recent time. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the effect of emotional intelligence on self-leadership in Malaysia public universities through the moderating analysis of individual Nationality by surveying 171 local and international students.

### ***Emotional Intelligence Quotient (EQ or EI)***

Emotional intelligence (EQ) or (EI) has been defined according to Mayer and Salovey<sup>25</sup> and Goleman<sup>26</sup> as social abilities or skills of an individual to monitor, discriminate and self-usage and other's emotion for the sake of regulating one's thinking and action.<sup>27</sup> In

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of Subordinate's Emotions and Leadership Effectiveness," *Leadership and Organization Development Journal* 39, no. 5 (2018): 592-607.

<sup>24</sup> Nicole S. Schutte and et. al., "Characteristic Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Well-being," *Cognition & Emotion* 16, no. 6 (2002): 769-785; Mayer and Salovey, "What Emotional Intelligence . . .,"

<sup>25</sup> John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey, "What Emotional Intelligence?" in *Emotional Development and Intelligence: Implications for Educators*, eds. Peter Salovey and David J. Sluyter (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 3-31.

<sup>26</sup> Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can be Matter More Than IQ* (Bantam Books, NY, 2007).

<sup>27</sup> Rohana Ngah and et. al., "Comparative Study of Emotional Intelligence and Entrepreneurial Orientation Between Malaysian and Indonesian University Students," *Procedia Economics and Finance* 37 (2016), doi: 100-107.10.1016/S2212-5671(16)30099-5.

addition, it can be also described as the ability of a person to perceive, integrate, understand and manage emotions. Emotional intelligence is perceived as a skill in surviving at the workplace and this skill is not an academic subject taught in the classroom but it is learnable as well as trainable through life and experience. EQ comprises of four emotion components: accurately perceiving emotions, integrating emotions, understanding emotions and managing emotions.<sup>28</sup>

According to the psychologist Daniel Goleman, a famous emotional intelligence book writer, it consists of five components: self-awareness, self-regulation, internal or intrinsic motivation, empathy and social skills. These skills have been reportedly important skills for leaders especially when it comes to managing and leading people in organizations; and are also agreed to be useful in improving relationships between leaders and followers at workplaces. EQ skills are not only meant to help leaders, but individuals in their daily relationships with people. It equips individuals the survival skills of maintaining relationships through understanding people's feelings, preferences and emotions.

Self-awareness is the ability to understand your own emotions and how this ability affects your own performance.<sup>29</sup> Self-management or self-regulation is an ability someone to keep his or her own emotions under management and control as well as the ability to adjust with the environment.<sup>30</sup> It is an individual self-assessment that helps to cope with the people and survive in any situation. This can be understood as how individual controls his or her feelings and emotions which can positive or negative emotions, how such person wants to be perceived by the people; and the image he/she wants to projects to the people.

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<sup>28</sup> Tamera R. Schneider, Joseph B. Lyons and Steven Khazon, "Emotional Intelligence and Resilience," *Personality and Individual Differences* 55 (2013): 909–914.

<sup>29</sup> Goleman Daniel, "What Emotional Self Awareness?" Korn Ferry Institute, 2017. <https://www.kornferry.com/institute/what-is-emotional-self-awareness>

<sup>30</sup> I. O. Christian, "Self - Management Dimension of Emotional Intelligence as Determination of Academic Administration in Public University." *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice*, 17 (1), 2017, 49-57.

Social awareness is an ability to study people's emotions by accurately predicting or reading people's feelings with the sense of knowing what they want and putting their situations in ones' shoes.<sup>31</sup> Hence, it is about showing sense of empathy towards people, conditions and environment. Relationship management can be perceived as the ability of combining own emotions and emotions of others in managing relationships successfully. Thus, it is about keeping or managing relationships with people, teamwork and collaborations while growing by withstanding any challenge.<sup>32</sup>

### ***Emotional Intelligence Quotient, Leadership and Related Variables***

However, emotional intelligence has gained huge attention and popularity from different academic and non- academic settings since two decades and EQ abilities, capabilities and skills have become very important for effective leadership, team building, communication and social skills.<sup>33</sup> In educational circles, students' cognitive, intellectual development and better academic performance were reported to be enhanced through positive, social interaction with peers.<sup>34</sup> EQ has been linked to leadership effectiveness, although further studies are proposed to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and educational leadership. Authors and researchers in the field of psychology and educational leadership/management agreed on the vital roles that the EQ plays in individuals and organization when it comes to leadership, social skills and human relation.

In relation to emotional intelligence, leadership and other variables, extensive studies on emotional intelligence and leadership

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<sup>31</sup> D. Markovic, (2017). "Do trainers need emotional intelligence?" Coyote. <https://pjpeu.coe.int/documents/1017981/7110670/Dotrainersneedemotionalintelligence.pdf/bb710fbc-3079-49ce-9dd5-d91919a05fa5>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Parvish K. Chopra and Gopar K. Kanji, "Emotional Intelligence: A Catalyst for Inspirational Leadership and Management Excellence," *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence* 21, issue 10 (2010): 971-1004.

<sup>34</sup> Boon-How Chew, Azhar Md. Zain and Faezah Hassan, "The Relationship between the Social Management of Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance Among Medical Students". *Psychology, Health & Medicine* 20, no. 2 (2014): 198-204.

have reported an association between both variables. A research carried out by Cote et al<sup>35</sup> on EQ and leadership emergence in small groups stated that, there are numbers of emotional intelligence dimensions associated with the leadership emergence. Among the emotional intelligence dimensions, the ability to understand emotions was found most consistently related to leadership emergence. In a study of student social self-efficacy, leadership and academic performance by Dunbar et al<sup>36</sup> it was found that a positive relationship exists between students' social self-efficacy and grades. The study concluded that, high student social efficacy is one of the factors or student achievement in a collaborative learning environment should be taken serious when designing curricula. Thus, this can be understood as the strong connection does exist between social self-efficacy, emotional intelligence and self-leadership. Emotional intelligence skills are those skills required for leaders and individuals in dealing with people at the workplace and in the society. This is what brought social self-efficacy into the picture and connect self-leadership and EQ. The instance is given as that of someone who is blessed with emotional intelligence skills, having a high possibility to develop strong self-leadership which will pave ways for smooth social maneuverability and positive social relationships.

While looking at the positive relationship between EQ and leadership, Parrish<sup>37</sup> study on the relevance of emotional intelligence for leadership using semi-structured interview reported academic leadership relating to emotional intelligence components: empathy, inspiring, guiding others and responsibility managing oneself. Chan<sup>38</sup> on leadership and EQ among Chinese gifted students also reported

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<sup>35</sup> Stephane Côté and et. al., "Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Emergence in Small Groups," *The Leadership Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (2010): 496-508.

<sup>36</sup> Robert L. Dunbar and et. al., "Student Social Self-efficacy, Leadership Status, and Academic Performance in Collaborative Learning Environments," *Studies in Higher Education* 43, no. 9 (2016): 1503-1523, doi: 10.1080/03075079.2016.1265496.

<sup>37</sup> Rene D. Parrish, "The Relevance of Emotional Intelligence for Leadership in A Higher Education Context," *Studies in Higher Education* 40, no. 5 (2013): 821-837.

<sup>38</sup> David W. Chan, "Leadership Competencies Among Chinese Gifted Students in Hong Kong: The Connection with Emotional Intelligence and Successful Intelligence," *Roeper Review* 29, no. 3 (2007):183-189.

some EQ components such as social skill and emotion utilization, managing and regulating emotions predicted leadership among gifted students in Hong Kong. Moreover, EI was found to support transformational leadership in a study of done in Ireland<sup>39</sup> on transformational leadership and EQ. Alnabhan<sup>40</sup> revealed in his research titled: emotional intelligence as a predictor of leadership of Kuwaiti graders that some components of EQ found to predict leadership for high achiever students. This is an indication that, EQ plays an important role in fostering a high level of leadership among students and can become a predictor for high academic performance.

Apart from leadership, other variables have been reported to be influenced by emotional intelligence. A study of Kong et al.<sup>41</sup> on resilience moderating intelligence and communication ability among Chinese nursing students revealed emotional intelligence correlated with Chinese students' clinical communication ability. This is an indication of the EQ ability to influence communication. It is not surprising seeing EQ and communication correlated as internal communication and helping in the awareness of people's emotion and as well as strengthening relationships. Likewise, a cross-sectional study of emotional intelligence among nursing students by Stiglic et al.<sup>42</sup> revealed that, emotional intelligence in nursing is considered as a global study and studies across the globe have reported emotional intelligence influence nurses' work and helping in having relationships with their patients. Hence, this shows the importance of EQ among nurses and how nurses have utilised EQ to get along with their patients. This is another cogent evidence the role of EQ for

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<sup>39</sup> Vernon Ireland, "Leadership: The Role of Transformational Leadership and Emotional Intelligence," *Australian Journal of Civil Engineering* 5, no. 1 (2008): 7-18.

<sup>40</sup> Mousa Alnabhan, "Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor of Leadership of Kuwaiti High and Low Achieving 11<sup>th</sup> Graders," *Gifted and Talented International* 25, no. 2(2016):107-110.

<sup>41</sup> Linghua Kong and et. al., "Resilience Moderates the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Clinical Communication Ability Among Chinese Practice Nursing Students: A structural Equation Model Analysis," *Nurse Education Today* 46 (2016): 64-68, doi: 10.1016/j.nedt.2016.08.028.

<sup>42</sup> Gregor Štiglic and et. al., "Emotional Intelligence Among Nursing Students: Findings from A Cross-sectional Study," *Nurse Education Today* 66 (2018):33-38, doi: 10.1016/j.nedt.2018.03.028.

keeping relationships. Another study on EQ among nursing students by Lewis, Neville and Ashkanasy<sup>43</sup> reported EQ reduces stress and anxiety that related to life care which promotes effective communication and improves nursing performance. These are the vital evidences of the effectiveness of EQ in dealing with different problems especially at the workplace.

In contrast, demographic variables have been reported to influence EQ. Stiglic et al.<sup>44</sup> reported nursing student's EQ tends to be higher compared to the engineering students and for gender, women has higher EQ than men. In addition, EQ or EI was found to correlate with engineering student's GPR in a study of Skipper and Brandenburg<sup>45</sup> on emotional intelligence and academic performance of engineering students. Equally, student long work experience correlated with EI. Hence, it was then stated in their study that, high performing students normally display high or more proficiency in soft skills such as emotional intelligence. It was mentioned to predict gifted student performance in a study of Ayoub and Aljughaiman<sup>46</sup> on a predictive structural model for gifted students' performance and EQ. It predicted student creativity in Iran in a study of Noorafshan and Jowkar<sup>47</sup> on the effect of emotional intelligence and creativity and reported a difference between male and female in terms of general emotional intelligence. It was indicated to reduce threat appraisal, negative affect and challenge physiological responses to

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<sup>43</sup> Gillian M. Lewis, Christine Neville and Neal M. Ashkanasy, "Emotional Intelligence and Affective Events in Nursing Education: A Narrative Review," *Nurse Education Today* 53 (2017): 34-40, doi: 10.1016/j.nedt.2017.04.001.

<sup>44</sup> Gregor Štiglic and et. al., "Emotional Intelligence Among Nursing Students: Findings from A Cross-sectional Study," *Nurse Education Today* 66 (2018):33-38, doi: 10.1016/j.nedt.2018.03.028.

<sup>45</sup> Olen C. Skipper and Stefanie Brandenburg, "Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance of Engineering Students," *Engineering Project Organization Journal* 3, no. 1 (2013): 13-21.

<sup>46</sup> Alaa Eldin A. Ayoub and Abdullah M. Aljughaiman, "A Predictive Structural Model for Gifted students' Performance: A Study Based on Intelligence and Its Implicit Theories," *Learning and Individual Differences* 51 (2016): 11-18.

<sup>47</sup> Leaila Noorafshan and Bahram Jowkar, "The Effect of Emotional Intelligence and Its Components on Creativity," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 84 (2013):791-795.



stress in a study of Schneider, Lyons and Khazon<sup>48</sup> on emotional intelligence and resilience as well as correlated to fieldwork performance scores among occupational therapy students in the United States in a study of Andonian.<sup>49</sup>

In a study comparing between Malaysian and Indonesian university students by Ngah et al<sup>50</sup> on emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial orientation showed a significant difference Malaysian and Indonesian students in terms of emotional intelligence. In this comparative study of both students, EQ and entrepreneurial orientation tends to have an impact on Indonesian students' entrepreneurial inclination compared to Malaysian ones. Coupled with a study of emotional intelligence and optimism among students in Turkey by Kumcagiz et al<sup>51</sup> that reported a positive correlation between optimism level and levels of emotional intelligence and found students' optimism level predicted the level of their emotional intelligence. The level of social skills was found correlated with the levels of emotional intelligence.<sup>52</sup> On the whole, this can be interpreted that, someone with high level of emotional intelligence has a tendency of adapting and coping with any current situation and has a high possibility of solving problems easily through personal understanding of his or her self as well as others' situations. Thus, he/she has a likelihood to cope well during stressful situations.<sup>53</sup> This can be understood as, emotional intelligence goes beyond influencing merely leadership as it appears to influence student

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<sup>48</sup> Schneider, Lyons and Khazon, "Emotional Intelligence and Resilience . . .

<sup>49</sup> Lynne Andonian, "Emotional Intelligence, Self-efficacy, and Occupational Therapy Students' Fieldwork Performance," *Occupational Therapy Health Care* 27, no. 3 (2012): 201-15, doi: 10.3109/07380577.2012.763199.

<sup>50</sup> Rohana Ngah and et. al., "Comparative Study of Emotional Intelligence . . .

<sup>51</sup> Hatice Kumcagiz and et. al., "The Effects of Emotional Intelligence on Optimism of University Students," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 30 (2011): 973-977.

<sup>52</sup> Nilüfer Özabacı, "Öğretmen Adaylarının Duygusal Zeka ve Sosyal Beceri Düzeyleri Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi," *Ulusal Eğitim Bilimleri Kurultayı* 13 (2004): 6-9, <https://www.pegem.net/dosyalar/dokuman/254.pdf>.

<sup>53</sup> Nesrin H. Şahin, Murat Güler and Nejat Basım, "A Tipi Kişilik Orüntüsünde Bilişsel ve Duygusal Zekânın Stresle Başa Çıkma ve Stres Belirtileri ile İlişkisi," *Psikiyatri Dergisi*, 20, no. 3 (2009), 243-254; Kumcagiz and et. al., "The Effects of Emotional Intelligence . . .

academic performance, their optimism, improves student's communication ability, grades and reduces stress among students. Thus, this research aims to achieve the following objectives and test the hypotheses:

- To investigate if there is a direct-effect of students' emotional intelligence on self-leadership.
  1. *Students' emotional intelligence will have a significant direct-effect on self-leadership.*
- To examine if student's nationality moderates the effect of emotional intelligence on self-leadership.
  2. *Students' nationality will moderate the effect of emotional intelligence on self-leadership.*
- To check the model-fit of both emotional intelligence and self-leadership as well as the item's reliability and construct validity.
  3. *Emotional intelligence and self-leadership will achieve high item reliability and construct validity.*

## Methods

This research uses survey and the population of this study consists of international and Malaysian students studying at the Malaysia public University in Northern part of Malaysia. In this study, 171 students participated and their selection was based on quota sampling procedure by taking the participants based on their region and continents. The data were collected 2016/2017 academic year from undergraduates and postgraduates Malaysian and international students. Self-leadership questionnaire (SLQ) by Gregory E. Prussia, Joe S. Anderson & Charles C. Manz,<sup>54</sup> was adapted for self-leadership. SLQ has 7 factors (Visualizing successful performance, Self-goal setting, Self-talk, Self-reward, Self-punishment, Self-observation and Self-cueing) and unfortunately, all the factors tend to have three items which considerably might not be sufficient to represent the construct during the reliability and validity processes.

With the inadequacy of items to represent a factor and for the

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<sup>54</sup> Prussia, Anderson and Manz, "Self-leadership and . . .

performance of the model-fit, some items were deleted and all other factors merged as one construct for Emotional in Self-leadership. This is due to “Forced Choice Single Factor” measure that is allowed to avoid multicollinearity and it was used to determine Big-Five personality for marketers’ items reliability and construct validity.<sup>55</sup> Forced Choice Single Factor is reported as useful measures, especially when there is a problem of alignment between theory and measurement or tension between the benefit of measurement precision and the benefit of generalizability.<sup>56</sup> This is considered as a clash between theorists and psychometricians or a clash between precision and generalizability. For purpose of merging and collapsing items and factors, Item response theory (IRT) software has now been developed to reduce multidimensional items to unidimensional. This research has followed the process of forcing items that failed to be fitted or loaded under their theoretical constructs to the construct that the measurement has suggested by using “Forced Choice Items”.

In relation to emotional intelligence, this study adopted a short version of an assessment adapted from Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Framework by The Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence adapted into a questionnaire by Belinda Davies. The instrument has 4 major constructs: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social-Awareness, and Relationship Management with the 11 sub-factors. Self-Awareness has 3 sub-factor: self-awareness, accurate self-awareness and self-confidence. Self-Management has 3 sub-factors: emotional self-control, transparency and adaptability. Social Awareness has only 1 sub-factor which is empathy while Relationship Management has 4 sub-factors: developing others, inspirational leadership, conflict management and teamwork and collaboration.

The researchers merged sub-factors of emotional intelligence under their major constructs as was done with self-leadership

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<sup>55</sup> Jesus F. Salgado and Gabriel Tauriz, “The Five-factor Model. Forced-choice Personality Inventories and Performance: A Comprehensive Meta-analysis of Academic and Occupational Validity Studies,” *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* 23, no. 1 (2014), 3.

<sup>56</sup> Margaret Cording, Petra Christmann and Carmen Weigelt, “Measuring Theoretically Complex Constructs: The Case of Acquisition Performance,” *Strategic Organization* 8, no. 1 (2010): 11–41.

construct. The amalgamation of sub-factors occurred due to the inconsistency of some theoretical sub-factors that have very little items to represent them such self-awareness and inspirational leadership factors that were represented by only 3 items. It is also done due to the inconsistency of some constructs represented by only 1 sub-factor. Therefore, during the process of determining the item's reliability and construct validity under PLS measurement model, some items and sub-factors were deleted due to their poor factor loadings and insufficient items or indicators to represent the construct as was earlier explained.

## **Findings**

### ***Demographic Data***

In this study, the participants consist of Malaysians and international students. 52% (n=96) of the respondents were Malaysians while 48 (n=75) were international students. 50.3% (n=86) of the participants were females while 49.7% (n=85) were males. From the 171 participants (Malaysian and International), female students were found to be the dominant, due to the population of female students dominance at higher institutions in Malaysia.

### **Structural Model**

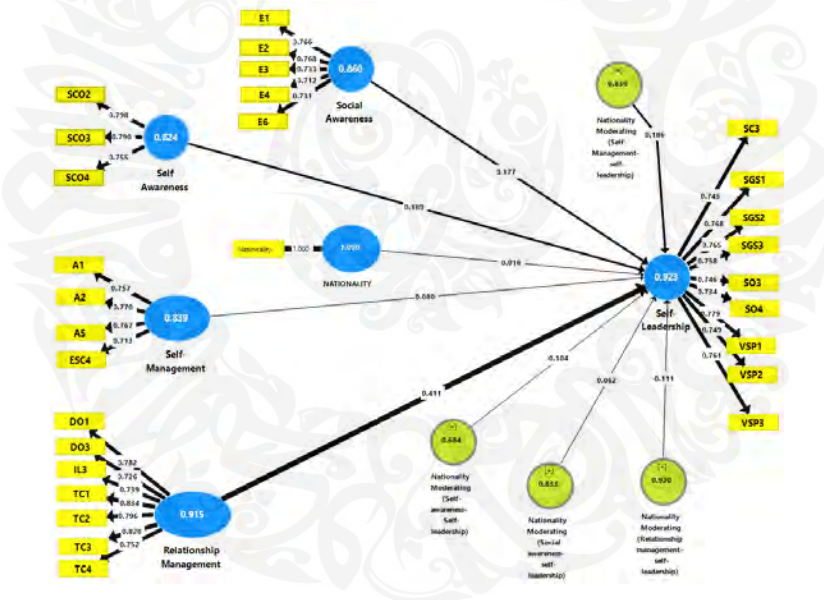
In this study, structural equation model (SEM) was used to determine the effect of emotional intelligence and self-leadership and the moderation of student nationality by using PLS as a statistical tool. PLS-SEM was adopted in analyzing the path model. PLS-SEM is recommended when a study is a prediction-oriented and in extending an existing theory.<sup>57</sup> To determine the PLS path assessment, this study followed a two-step process: assessment of measurement model and assessment of structural model. The assessment of the measurement model includes, examining individual item reliability,

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<sup>57</sup> Joe F. Hair, Christian M. Ringle and Marko Sarstedt, "PLS-SEM: Indeed A Silver Bullet," *Journal of Marketing Theory & Practice* 19, no. 2 (2011):139-152; John Hulland, "Use of Partial Least Squares (PLS) in Strategic Management Research: A Review of Four Recent Studies," *Strategic Management Journal* 20. No. 2 (1999): 195-204.

ascertaining the internal consistency reliability and ascertaining discriminant validity. For the assessment of the structural model, it includes the assessment of the significance of path coefficient, evaluating the level of R-squared values, determining the effect size and ascertaining the predictive relevance. To determine the item reliability, items were deleted as stated before from emotional intelligence and self-leadership instrument for offering loadings under the threshold of 0.40. Besides, to conduct internal consistency reliability, the Cronbach's alpha and composite coefficient were used. The Composite reliability coefficient is believed to give the least subjective estimation of reliability compared to Cronbach's alpha coefficient for reporting item contribution to the construct.<sup>58</sup>

Figure 1: SmartPLS algorithm value of the measurement model



<sup>58</sup> Donald W. Barclay and Christopher Higgins, "The Partial Least Squares (PLS) Approach to Causal Modeling: Personal Computer Adoption and Use as An Illustration," *Technology Studies* 2, no. 2 (1995): 285–309; Oliver Götz, Liehr-Gobbers Kerstin & Manfred Kraft, "Evaluation of Structural Equation Models Using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) Approach," in *Handbook of Partial Least Squares: Concepts, Methods, and Applications*, eds. Vinci and et. al., (Berlin: Springer, 2010), 691-712.

This study performed item reliability which was based according Duarte & Rapose,<sup>59</sup> Hulland<sup>60</sup> on calculating the outer loadings of all construct's measure with the rule of thumb of maintaining items which their loadings fall between .40 and .70.<sup>61</sup> So, in this study, after the deletion of some items, and merging EQ factors under their major constructs, 19 items were maintained under Emotional intelligence variable while 9 items under self-leadership variable. Under emotional intelligence and self-leadership constructs, items loading range from .70 to .80. Thus, the loadings for both constructs are considered high and acceptable as shown in Table 1. For the internal consistency reliability, Composite Reliability in Table 1 indicates that, the constructs in this study are reliable and acceptable for model as they were above .70 threshold from ranging from .80 to .92. In this study, convergent validity was also checked to know the degree to which indicators actually signify the intended latent construct. This according to Sekaran & Bougie<sup>62</sup>, shows the involving other measures of the same latent variable.

Table 1: Formative Outer Measurement Model Assessment, Construct Discriminant Validity and Reliability

Construct	Loadings	Cronbach	Composite Reliability	Discriminant Validity	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE					
<i>Relationship Management</i>		.89	.91	.78	.60
RM_DO1	.78				
RM_DO3	.72				
RM_IL3	.73				

<sup>59</sup> Paulo A. Duarte and Mário B. Raposo, "A PLS Model to Study Brand Preference: An Application to the Mobile Phone Market," in *Handbook of Partial Least Squares*, eds. Vinzi V. Esposito and et. al., (New York: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2009), 449-485.

<sup>60</sup> Hulland, "Use of Partial Least Squares (PLS) . . .

<sup>61</sup> Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt, "PLS-SEM: Indeed A Silver Bullet . . .

<sup>62</sup> Uma Sekaran and Roger Bougie, *Research Methods for Business: A Skill-building Approach* (Chichester: Wiley, 2010).

THE EFFECT OF STUDENT'S EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE  
ON SELF-LEADERSHIP IN MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

RM_TC1	.83				
RM_TC2	.79				
RM_TC3	.82				
RM_TC4	.75				
<i>Self-Management</i>		.74	.83	.70	.56
SM_A1	.75				
SM_A2	.77				
SM_A5	.76				
<i>Self-Awareness</i>		.68	.82	.55	.61
ESA_SCO2	.79				
SSA_SCO3	.79				
SSA_SCO4	.75				
<i>Social-Awareness</i>		.79	.86	.67	.55
E1	.76				
E2	.76				
E3	.73				
E4	.71				
E6	.73				
SELF-LEADERSHIP		.90	.92	.72	.57
SL_SC3	.74				
SL_SGS1	.76				
SL_SGS2	.76				
SL_SGS3	.75				
SL_SO3	.74				
SL_SO4	.73				
SL_VSP1	.77				
SL_VSP2	.74				
SL_VSP3	.75				

To estimate convergent validity in this study and checking the research hypothesis 3, “*Emotional intelligence and self-leadership will achieve high item reliability and construct validity.*” Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of every latent construct was examined by extracting the factor and cross loading of all indicator items that are loaded under their respective latent constructs. It was found that, every latent constructs in this study is above .50 ranging from .56 to .61 as suggested by Chin (1998) in order to attain adequate convergent validity. Besides, this study also determined discriminant

validity to know according Duarte & Rapose<sup>63</sup> the degree to which a specific latent variable is different from other latent variables. It was done by studying AVE and it was found that, all constructs are above value of .50, ranging from as shown in Table 1.

### Assessment of Significance of Structural Model

To determine the assessment, standard bootstrapping procedure with a number of 5000 bootstrap samples and 171 cases were ran to assess significance of path coefficients as suggested by Hair et al,<sup>64</sup> and Henseler et al.<sup>65</sup> Figure 1 present the effect model of emotional intelligence constructs on self-leadership moderating by student nationality. Also, looking at the Figure 1, checking the research hypothesis 1 “*Students’ emotional intelligence will have a significant direct-effect on self-leadership.*” EQ: Relationship Management had a significant and positive direct-effect ( $\beta = 0.411, P < 0.001$ ) on *Self-Leadership*, *Social Awareness* ( $\beta = 0.177, P < 0.024$ ) on *Self-leadership* and *Self-Awareness* ( $\beta = 0.189, P < 0.007$ ) on *Self-leadership* while no direct-effect of *Self-management* was found on *Self-leadership*.

Checking the moderating effect or interaction as mentioned in the research hypothesis 2 “*Students’ nationality will moderate the effect of emotional intelligence on self-leadership*”, this study found a significant moderation of student nationality between *Self-management* and *Self-leadership* as shown in Figure 1 and Table 2. This can be interpreted that, Malaysian and international students in Malaysia based on the participants were differed in terms self-management or how they manage their emotions towards own self or own leadership. This study also moderated nationality between other emotional intelligence constructs and self-leadership, but, insignificant moderations were found.

<sup>63</sup> Duarte and Raposo, “A PLS Model to Study Brand Preference . . .

<sup>64</sup> Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt, “PLS-SEM: Indeed A Silver Bullet . . .”; Joe F. Hair, *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM)* (California: Sage Publication, Inc, 2014).

<sup>65</sup> Jörg Henseler, Christian M. Ringle and Rudolf R. Sinkovics, “The Use of Partial Least Squares Path Modelling in International Marketing,” *Advances in International Marketing* 20 (2009): 277-320.



The coefficient ( $R^2$ ) was also determined in this study. The coefficient displaces all the effects of independent variable(s) on dependent variable(s). The ( $R^2$ ) value of the overall model of this study is 58% and student nationality explains the variance of more than 10% (.18) which it is considered significant. Thus, nationality do moderate between emotional intelligence in terms of self-management and self-leadership.

Table 2: Path Coefficients between Emotional Intelligence and Self-Leadership

Path Coefficients	T Statistics	P Values
NATIONALITY -> Self-Leadership	0.281	0.779
Nationality Moderating (Relationship management-self-leadership)_ -> Self-Leadership	1.153	0.249
Nationality Moderating (Self-Management-self-leadership) -> Self-Leadership	2.368	0.018
Nationality Moderating (Self-awareness-Self-leadership) -> Self-Leadership	1.145	0.253
Nationality Moderating (Social awareness-self-leadership) -> Self-Leadership	0.574	0.567
Relationship Management -> Self-Leadership	5.128	0.000
Self-Awareness -> Self-Leadership	2.843	0.005
Self-Management -> Self-Leadership	1.029	0.304
Social-Awareness -> Self-Leadership	2.115	0.035

## Findings

Table 3 presented the research hypotheses and the findings from SmartPLS 3. This research has four hypotheses with relationship management, self and social awareness and self-management measuring emotional intelligence. The conclusion column presents the hypotheses, whether the hypotheses are supported or unsupported. As shown in the table 4, the hypothesis is supported in terms of the direct-effect of emotional intelligence constructs on self-leadership and only supported the moderation of student nationality between EQ (self-management) and self-leadership.

Table 3. Hypotheses Presentation and Conclusion

Hypotheses	Findings	Variable	Conclusion
H1: Students' emotional intelligence will have a significant direct-effect on self-leadership."	Yes: ( $\beta = .411, P < 0.001$ ) ( $\beta = .177, P < 0.024$ ) ( $\beta = .189, P < 0.007$ )	<i>Relationship Management and Self-leadership Social Awareness and Self-leadership Self-Awareness and Self-leadership</i>	Supported
H2: Students' nationality will moderate the effect of emotional intelligence on self-leadership", H3: Emotional intelligence and self-leadership will achieve high item reliability and construct validity."	Significant  T-statistics, $P < 0.001$	EQ (Self-management-Nationality-Self-Leadership  Cronbach's Alpha, Composite reliability, Discriminant validity and AVE	Supported

## Discussion and Recommendation

This study discusses the importance of emotional intelligence and self-leadership among students. Literature has linked high emotional intelligence to leadership effectiveness. The findings of this study revealed the direct-effect of students' EQ (relationship management, social awareness and self-awareness) and their self-leadership. The findings supported the finding of Cote et al (2010) that reported the influence of EQ on leadership emergence and Dunbat's study on student social self-efficacy, leadership and academic performance relationship with grades. The findings of this study envisaged that student improvement in social emotions increases their academic performance and leadership. In addition to this, to increase student academic performance, cognitive ability and intellect, a program for student emotional intelligence enhancement could be the mechanism. This is in line with Chew, Zain and Hassan, on improving students' cognitive, intellectual development and better academic performance

through the enhancement of positive social interaction with peers.<sup>66</sup> With the findings of this study reporting the prediction of emotional intelligence and self-leadership among Malaysian and international students at Malaysian Northern university, this can be interpreted that, the high emotions displaced by Malaysian and international students, the better effective self-leadership possessed and high academic outcomes achieved. This is aligned with Alnabhan while reporting emotional intelligence as a predictor of leadership of Kuwaiti graders and predicted leadership for high achiever students.<sup>67</sup>

In relation to moderating variable, this study revealed a significant effect of student nationality as a moderator between self-management and self-leadership. This can be understood as, both Malaysian and international students seemed to be very different the ways they manage themselves. The results do not specify how Malaysian and international students manage themselves neither does it reveal their coping strategies or techniques in managing themselves. This could be a research gap that future researchers could explore by investigating or exploring how Malaysian and international students manage their emotions or techniques that individuals use to control their feelings while managing their relationships with others. This could be aligned with Neck and Houghton,<sup>68</sup> reporting the importance of individual role performance that could become an effective means to positively influence adaptability, productivity and performance as well as task proficiency.<sup>69</sup> It has also been supported the role of self-leadership reported by Topper<sup>70</sup> in the self-management improvement which help to decide where to go and move around while building self-goal, initiative and believe that will support ones' growth and development. Therefore, it is recommended for international students in Malaysia to have self-leadership skills to improve their social

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<sup>66</sup> Boon-How Chew, Azhar Md. Zain and Faezah Hassan, "The Relationship between the Social Management . . .

<sup>67</sup> Mousa Alnabhan, "Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor . . .

<sup>68</sup> Neck and Houghton, "Two Decades of Self-Leadership Theory . . .

<sup>69</sup> Hauschildt and Konrad, "Self-Leadership and Team Members . . .

<sup>70</sup> Topper, "Self-Leadership: Road to Personal Excellence . . .

skills in order to achieve their self-goals while they are in Malaysia to study.

Based on the best researchers' knowledge, there are no research or findings that have reported nationality moderating EQ and self-leadership. Therefore, it is recommended for future studies to replicate this research by collecting more or large data among Malaysian and international students at different universities.

### **Implication and Conclusion**

This study investigated the direct-effect of student's emotional intelligence on their self-leadership skills. It also examined whether student nationality could moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-leadership. The findings of this study could be used to improve students in Malaysia higher institutions emotional intelligences and self-leadership. With the moderation of student nationality of the effect of self-management on self-leadership, this study urged the university management, especially in the Northern part of Malaysia, education policy-makers and Ministry of Education in Malaysia to provide more training, workshops, activities and programs on improving students' emotions and management since the literature has attested EQ predicting student leadership, grades, academic performance, self-efficacy and cognitive ability. It will pave ways for student's interaction, integration and diversity.

Additionally, emotional intelligence as reported helps 'study group', collaborative learning, cooperative learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning and assists teachers or instructors in applying student-centred-learning approach. These activities and methods could be effective ways to forge collaboration among students and improve their emotions as well teacher-student relationships. Intellectual skills or Intelligence quotient (IQ) helps to process the academic information, knowledge application and critical thinking as argued before. In contrast, EQ helps in assessing an emotion and getting along with people. If EQ is reported in this study and literature to render help in improving student academic performance, this implies to adopt a new teaching and learning paradigm in Northern part of Malaysia and as well as other higher

institutions in Malaysia where student-centred-learning approach can be applied and collaborative, cooperative learning or project-based learning can be embedded in teaching to increase tolerance among students for the sake positive learning outcomes.

These research findings are interesting with good implication and recommendation for best practices. Further studies on the issue of student emotional intelligence and self-leadership is highly needed at large scale and sample sizing other universities in Malaysia. Perhaps, future studies could venture into investigating the influence or relationship between university student emotional intelligence and academic performance, stress and academic grades since the paramount of the literature and studies done on these issues were from the West. It would be interesting to examine and test empirically those variables in Malaysian context at higher institutions.

# AL-SHAJARAH

## Special Issue

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