

The Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Employees' Psychology Well Being: Altruism as a Moderator

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the influence of emotional intelligence on employee psychological well-being with altruism as a moderator. This study was a cross-sectional study using quantitative methods, through the distribution of questionnaires. A total of 194 respondents were selected among employees of a government agency in Malaysia. The USM Emotional Quotient Inventory (USMEQ-i) was used in this research to measure emotional intelligence, The Psychological General Well-Being Index (PGWBI) was used to measure psychological wellbeing and Adapted Self- Report Altruism Scale was used to measure altruism. The results showed that emotional intelligence has an influence on psychological well-being of employees positively and significantly. However, the results found that altruism did not moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence with psychological well-being of employees.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Altruism, Psychological Well-Being, Emotions, Quantitative

Introduction and Literature Review

The advancement of technology in the era of globalization is now seen as a factor that makes the process of interaction between parties easier and faster. Finding information can also be done only at the fingertips and it helps the organization to achieve its' goals quickly and easily. Competition between organizations in ensuring that the organization's position and name is rising in comparison to other organizations is also important to enable them to improve their reputation and expand their position globally. This is in line with the theory by many management members that an organization needs to change and be able to adapt to compete with other organizations (Hall, 1996; Higgins, 1996).

The performance and productivity of an organization can be measured and viewed through the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) which is able to increase competition between one organization and another. In ensuring that organizations reach the required level of KPI,

employees are a key source to the improvement and scores of these KPIs. If employees are able to do their job well, it can also help the organization by achieving their KPIs which then will boost the organization's reputation.

In order to ensure a smooth work environment and commitment among employees in the organization, emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and altruism among employees are important factors in producing dedicated, committed and happy employees. The main task of employees is to provide quality service to the public. Employees should have the passion and determination to ensure that the services they provide are quality and community-driven. Therefore, employees need to improve their quality of service over time.

According to Chaplin (2009), emotional intelligence is an individual's ability to adapt and respond to new situations more quickly and effectively. Emotions are very important in human life and they affect interpersonal relationships through physical and mental health. Individuals who know their emotions and can understand others' emotions are seen as happier and more successful (Certel et al., 2011). Furthermore, Goleman also states that emotional intelligence consists of five elements that are represented by self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy and social skills (Seyal & Afzaal, 2012).

According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to control the feelings and emotions of oneself and others, to distinguish between them and to use that information to guide one's actions and thoughts. Emotional intelligence is increasingly valued as an important asset of the organization as it helps build the interpersonal relationships of all employees within a workforce to realize their goals and objectives. Emotional intelligence is an important measure of the success of a person's life in an organization that ultimately becomes a corporate success (Vinai & Satita, 2001; Dulewicz & Higgs, 2000).

Murray (1998) has shown that emotional intelligence is an ability to suppress negative emotions or emotions such as anger and doubt and to focus on positive feelings such as self-confidence. Furthermore, McGarvey (1997) states that there are four capabilities that must be developed to enhance an individual's emotional intelligence, namely the ability to control the impulse, emotion, and to be motivated in the face of frustration and empathy. In this regard, emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive, understand and effectively apply the power and good judgment of emotions that are the source of energy, information, relationships and human influence (Cooper & Sawaf, 1997).

In brief, in the context of an organization, emotional intelligence can be defined as the mechanism or capacity of an individual who exists to manage and control his or her emotions as well as to provide a positive impetus towards establishing a human relationship that can lead to the achievement of common goals and effectiveness organization.

Ryff (1989); Misero (2010), state that psychological well-being is a concept that strives to convey positive psychological functioning. Ryff (1989); Misero (2010) categorize psychological well-being into six main dimensions, namely, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. In addition, having a good psychological well-being is not only free from mental

problems, free from anxiety, achieving happiness, and so on. The important things to look for are self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, mastery of the environment, acceptance and purpose of life and ongoing self-development (Ryff, 1989; Lakoy, 2009). In this study, the focus is on how altruism's emotional and behavioural intelligence affects the psychological well-being of an employee in the organization.

Altruism on the other hand, is an act of voluntary action taken by one or a group of people to help others without expecting a response (Sears, 1994). In addition, according to Taufik (2012), he generally describes altruism as an activity to help others, which is grouped into social behaviour. It is said to be a social behaviour because it has a positive effect on others. Santrock (2003) says that altruism is an unselfish interest in helping others. Whereas, according to Davidoff (Year?), altruism is a person's willingness to help others and is a concern for others who are unselfish.

According to Raven and Rubin (1983), he argues that altruism is an act done without expecting personal gain. Coben et al (2003), states that a person is treated as altruism when they give something, empathize, and do not expect a response from the person being assisted. According to Baston (2002); Carr (2004), altruism is a positive response, such as empathy. A person with altruism has motivation, a desire to always help others and a duty directed toward the good of others.

Altruistic behaviours are defined as intentional and voluntary behaviours that are intended to enhance the well-being of others that do not expect material benefits or external rewards for helpers (Batson, 2011; Steinberg, 2010). It has also been suggested that altruism is an important variable related to psychological well-being (Post, 2007). Pareek and Jain (2012) state that altruism plays a role in enhancing the psychological well-being of individuals engaged in altruistic acts. Zheng et al (2016) show that people who practise altruistic behaviour more often will experience better psychological well-being. In the theory of prosocial behaviour by Sturmer and Snyder (2010), it is suggested that people experience greater positive affect, life satisfaction, and psychological well-being when they engage in altruistic behaviour. Therefore, in the process of producing quality employees in an organization, good emotional intelligence, stable psychological well-being and altruism among employees are crucial elements. This is because it helps to realize the goals of the organization in producing good employees and for their well-being.

In a study conducted by Najib Ahmad Marzuki, Azlizamani Zubir and Ummi Habibah Abd Rani (2018), the results showed that the relationship between overall emotional intelligence and psychological well-being was significant with a value of $r = 0.59$, $p < .01$. This indicated that the higher the level of emotional intelligence among individuals, the better the psychological well-being of the individual. This is consistent with a study conducted by Mehmood and Gulzar et. al (2014), on the relationship of emotional intelligence to adolescent psychological well-being, who found a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence variables and psychological well-being. They concluded that emotionally intelligent people adopted a flexible pattern of life, which enabled one to adopt a change of attitude, which protected one from feeling frustrated and ignored. The study also found that the chain of continuous structure existed between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being.

Positive emotional intelligence is a strong predictor of better psychological adjustment and high self-esteem, while low or negative emotional intelligence is associated with depression, destructive and disturbing behaviours (Petrides & Furnham, 2000). Many research findings on emotional intelligence showed a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and mental health of children and adolescents. Improving emotional intelligence leads to a positive quality of life and low levels of emotional intelligence tend to develop psychopathology in primary school children (Emotional Intelligence, 1998).

The findings of a study conducted by Fabio and Kenny (2016) confirmed the emerging evidence that self-report measures of emotional intelligence were more robust than emotion-based intelligence tests in explaining well-being and other psychological constructs assessed (Zeidner et al., 2012). Although this may be partly understood as the issue of common method variance, they also found that when emotional intelligence was conceptualized rather than seen cognitively, emotional intelligence was stronger in relation to other perceptions, including well-being (Di Fabio & Kenny, 2012b; Di Fabio et al., 2014). The findings of the study that the nature of emotional intelligence explained well-being beyond the variance explained by personality, however, showed that the nature of emotional intelligence cannot be understood simply as a central factor of personality.

Hyun Jung Lee (2013), studied on the relationship between emotional intelligence and altruism among central government officials in South Korea. This study revealed that there was an important and positive correlation between emotional and altruistic intelligence factors in behaviour. Altruistic behaviour was associated with other people's emotional awareness factors as well as their own emotional management. Individuals with high emotional intelligence will behave and act altruistically at work, regardless of their personal interests.

Pokorski et al (2013), in their study stated that altruistic behaviour was influenced by age and level of emotional intelligence. The study was conducted according to differences in attitudes and levels of emotional intelligence and was categorized into two age groups, namely young (20-29 years) and elderly (60-79 years). The results showed that there was a strong relationship between emotional intelligence and altruistic behaviour in both young and old subjects, although there was a decrease in the emotional intelligence characteristics of the parent group. Researchers have shown that high emotional intelligence can be used as a good predictor of one's altruistic abilities.

Previous research showed that emotional intelligence is a common element affecting the different ways that individuals develop in their life, work and social skills, especially how those who are frustrated control their emotions and interact with other people. Individuals who have a good level of emotional intelligence will maintain a positive outlook, have high performance, succeed in whatever they choose to do and enjoy higher job satisfaction. Individuals who are able to identify and manage their own emotions and exhibit a sense of resilience and self-control, act as models for the people around them, thus gaining trust and respect (Modassir & Singh, 2008). Individuals who are able to identify and manage their own emotions and exhibit self-control will have a positive influence on their colleagues (Modassir & Singh, 2008).

Organ (1988) explains that altruism is a voluntary act that helps others cope with their job issues, such as helping a colleague completing a task. Altruism or helpful behaviour is a principle concern for the welfare of others (Wagner & Rush, 2000). Smith, Organ and Near (1983) defined altruism as intentional and direct behaviour aimed at helping something specific to a person face-to-face. For example, helping someone with a heavy workload or prioritizing new people.

Moreover, in line with previous research (Cohen & Abedallah, 2015; Schutte & Malouff, 2011), emotional intelligence was found to be positively associated with both altruism and psychological well-being. Individuals with higher levels of emotional intelligence tend to achieve greater resilience (Liu et al., 2013), experience higher positive affect (Koydemir & Schutz, 2012), have more social skills (Al-Tamimi & Al-Khawaldeh, 2016), and better direct these skills towards social outcomes and work performance (Joseph, Jin, Newman, & O'Boyle, 2015). All of these skills, traits, attitudes, and behaviours promote psychological well-being (Mayer et al., 2008). In general, the objective of this study was to study the emotional intelligence and altruism of the psychological well-being of the employees in the Ministry of Home Affairs. The objectives, in particular, are to;

- I. analyse the effects of emotional intelligence on psychological well-being of employees.
- II. study the influence of emotional intelligence on altruism among employees in the.
- III. examine the influence of emotional intelligence on psychological well-being of employees with altruism as a moderator

Method

This study involved 194 samples representing a government agency in Malaysia. The study sample consisted of Managers and Executives in the agency. From the 194 respondents, 72 respondents were male staff while the rest were female staff of 122. All of the study samples consisted of staff from different grades and divisions within the same organization.

In this study, a survey research method was used by distributing the questionnaires to the respondents for the purpose of obtaining data on the variables to be studied. Random sampling technique was used in the data collection process. The random sampling technique was chosen because of the easy access to the respondents as well as their ability to make formal representations of the study sample. The samples selected were appropriate and met the selection criteria that allowed for population representation. Researchers distributed the questionnaire through Google form to respondents and received a response rate of 66.7%. This technique was carried out by the researcher by distributing the questionnaire to the respondents needed in the organization. The study samples were selected based on the sampling guidelines described by (Cohen et al., 2001).

The instrument used in this study was a set of questionnaires and it was divided into four sections namely sections A, B, C and D. The instrument used in section A was related to the personal information of the respondent, part B was The USM Emotional Quotient Inventory (US Intelligence) emotion-I), section C was The Psychological General Well-Being Index (PGWBI), whereas section D used the Adapted Self-Report Altruism Scale.

Result and Discussion

The Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Psychological Well-Being

The results of simple linear regression analysis showed that emotional intelligence had a significant effect of β (168) = .019, $p < 0.05$ on psychological well-being of employees. This is shown by $F(1, 192) = 5.57$, $p = .019$, Beta = .168, $b = 2.361$, $p < 0.05$ indicating that emotional intelligence was a significant predictor of psychological well-being.

The study results showed that there was a positive effect of emotional intelligence on psychological well-being of employees. This explains that good emotional intelligence will affect psychological well-being of employees in the organization. The findings of this study are in line with previous studies. Sakunthala (2014) conducted a study on the effects of emotional intelligence on psychological well-being among workers and the results showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being of workers.

Furthermore, Landa et al (2010) identified a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being in the research they conducted. Several theories and empirical studies have identified that there was a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. This means that individuals with higher levels of emotional intelligence will experience higher levels of psychological well-being. Carmeli et al (2009) have also identified positive relationships between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being based on their research findings.

It is clear from all of the empirical findings as described above that emotional intelligence plays an important role in producing and shaping workers with good psychological well-being. Therefore, good emotional intelligence is seen as an important factor in producing workers with good psychological well-being. In addition, the rapidly changing and increasingly globalized era of globalization also demands that employees in the organization have good and stable psychological well-being to ensure they are able to commit to their work.

According to Salovey and Mayer's (1993) Emotional Intelligence Theory, an individual with good emotional intelligence is someone who can identify one's emotions, evaluate others' emotions, control emotions and use good emotions. Good and quality employees are those who are able to control their emotions and understand the emotions of others around them. Therefore, good emotional intelligence must be acquired by each employee to ensure that they are able to assess their own emotions and to ensure that their psychological well-being is in the best position to be a quality worker in an organization.

The Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Altruism

The results of simple linear regression analysis showed that emotional intelligence had a significant effect on altruism with β (484) = .000, $p < 0.05$. It was also indicated by the value of $F(1, 192) = 58.73$, $p = .000$, Beta = .484, $b = 7.664$, $p < .0001$ indicating that emotional intelligence was a significant predictor of altruism.

The results showed that there was a significant positive effect of emotional intelligence on altruism among employees in the organization. This result is in line with the findings of a study conducted by Alfin et al (2016) who found that there was a significant positive

relationship between emotional intelligence and altruistic behaviour. According to them, emotional intelligence affects 37.4% of altruism and the rest is influenced by factors other than emotional intelligence.

In addition, emotional intelligence also has benefits among employees in the organization that will be a reflection of altruism. It can be seen from the factors that can encourage a person to act altruistically, one of which is the emotional factor that drives an individual's mood (Widastuti, 2014). Usually when a person's feelings are comfortable, it will encourage them to provide more help, and the ability to recognize other people's emotions can also help the individual to understand the emotions of others in the process of social interaction with the people around them (Dayakisni, 2003).

Individuals who have a good level of emotional intelligence will tend to behave altruistically toward other people in their midst. This is because individuals who have a good level of emotional intelligence will be sensitive to their own emotions and the emotions of those around them. They can adapt quickly and effectively to new situations. Individuals with good emotional intelligence will also tend to act altruistically towards their surroundings in helping others adapt to the organizational environment they face.

Altruism as Moderator Between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being

The result of indicated that altruism did not play a role in moderating the relationship between emotional intelligence as well as the psychological well-being of employees in the organization. Although simple regression analyses have successfully demonstrated the influence of emotional intelligence on psychological well-being of employees and the influence of emotional intelligence on altruism, but it failed to prove altruism as a moderator between the two variables.

Conclusion

Practically, this study contributes to organizations in the country on the importance of emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among employees in an organization. This study can give most organizations an awareness of their need to ensure that their employees' emotional intelligence and psychological well-being are healthy. This is because, if employees in an organization have low emotional intelligence, it will negatively affect their psychological well-being and at the same time affect the development of the organization.

This study also showed the inherent influence of the variables studied and their relationships with each other. This study also highlights the importance of understanding the level of emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. Theoretically, this study is expected to further enrich previous studies when the findings showed that emotional intelligence influenced altruism and psychological well-being but altruism did not play a role as a moderator in the relationship of the two variables.

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