

Exploring Emotional Management Skills among B40 Women

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Abstract

This conceptual paper examines the emotional management competencies of B40 women, a socio-economic demographic in Malaysia defined by low household incomes. Emotional regulation is an essential skill for navigating daily challenges and improving overall well-being, especially for marginalized groups. This paper examines the convergence of two significant frameworks in the understanding of human development: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST) and the Emotional Intelligence (EI) framework. The paper seeks to amalgamate these two theories to provide a holistic framework for understanding how individuals traverse their social contexts, regulate emotions, and cultivate skills across diverse ecological strata. This conceptual paper integrates Bronfenbrenner's emphasis on developmental context with EI's focus on emotional and social competencies, providing novel insights into human growth within complex, multi-tiered social systems. This paper analyzes essential theoretical frameworks, contextual elements, and possible interventions to understand and facilitate the development of emotional management skills. It aims to offer insights into strategies that empower the B40 demographic.

Keywords: Emotional Management, B40 Women, Emotional Intelligence, Ecological Systems Theory, Empowerment.

Introduction

The B40 group, consisting of the lowest 40% of income-earning households, faces numerous socio-economic challenges, including financial instability, limited access to education, and reduced opportunities for personal advancement. Women in this group often face compounded stressors arising from gendered expectations, caregiving responsibilities, and

workplace discrimination. Emotional management skills—the ability to identify, understand, and regulate emotions—are crucial for addressing these challenges and fostering resilience. This paper seeks to analyze the factors influencing emotional management skills in B40 women and propose strategies for skill enhancement.

The socio-economic difficulties faced by B40 women often lead to heightened stress and anxiety levels. Financial instability necessitates that many women manage multiple responsibilities, including supervising household finances and ensuring their families' well-being. This ongoing pressure negatively affects their emotional health and limits their ability to engage in self-development activities. Understanding emotional regulation in this context is crucial for addressing these challenges and creating sustainable pathways for empowerment.

Cultural and societal expectations intensify the difficulties faced by B40 women. In many communities, women are expected to adopt traditional roles as carers and nurturers, often to the detriment of their personal aspirations and mental well-being. Such expectations may lead to emotional suppression, discouraging women from expressing their feelings or seeking help. This paper asserts that fostering emotional awareness and regulation is essential for interrupting these cycles and enabling women to reclaim their emotional and social agency.

Furthermore, the lack of access to resources such as mental health services, education, and training exacerbates the difficulties encountered by B40 women. A considerable proportion of these women are either unaware of or unable to access programs that could equip them with the skills essential for effective emotional management. This paper aims to identify obstacles and propose targeted interventions, thereby highlighting actionable solutions that address the specific needs of this population.

Emotional regulation skills are crucial for individual well-being and communal resilience. Women who skillfully manage their emotions are better equipped to improve their families and communities, thus creating a ripple effect of positive change. This paper highlights the importance of integrating emotional intelligence training into empowerment programs for B40 women, equipping them to face their challenges with confidence and resilience.

Human development is intrinsically intricate, shaped by various systems, environments, and emotional experiences. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory asserts that human development is influenced by interactions among various ecological layers, from immediate environments like family and school to wider societal factors. Emotional Intelligence, as defined by Daniel Goleman, pertains to the capacity to identify, understand, regulate, and affect emotions in oneself and others. Both theories offer significant insights into the developmental process, yet they frequently focus on distinct elements: the systems facilitating development and the emotional competencies that enhance social functioning. This paper seeks to integrate these theories to propose a framework for understanding how individuals cultivate emotional and social competencies within diverse ecological systems.

Problem Statement

The B40 women in Klang Valley, Malaysia, encounter various socio-economic difficulties, such as financial insecurity, caregiving obligations, and restricted access to resources, which can profoundly affect their emotional health. Effective emotional management is essential for coping with daily stressors and enhancing overall mental health and resilience. Nevertheless, scant research has been undertaken to comprehend the emotional management competencies of this demographic, especially concerning their socio-economic challenges. Although Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST) offer significant frameworks for comprehending emotional regulation in intricate social systems, there is a deficiency of thorough studies that amalgamate these frameworks to investigate how B40 women in Klang Valley cultivate and employ emotional management skills. The efficacy of emotional intelligence training programs and community-based initiatives in improving these skills is still inadequately investigated. The deficiency in knowledge obstructs the formulation of targeted interventions that can empower B40 women, bolster their resilience, and augment their decision-making abilities. This study aims to examine the emotional management skills of B40 women in Klang Valley, identify the socio-economic challenges they encounter, explore the significance of emotional management in their empowerment, and assess current programs designed to enhance emotional intelligence.

Objectives

Research Objectives:

1. To examine the emotional management skills of B40 women in Klang Valley, Malaysia
2. To identify the socio-economic challenges faced by B40 women in Klang Valley and their impact on emotional well-being
3. To explore the role of emotional management in improving resilience, decision-making, and empowerment for B40 women in Klang Valley.
5. To evaluate the effectiveness of existing emotional intelligence training programs and community-based initiatives in developing emotional management skills among B40 women in Klang Valley

Literature Review

With an emphasis on the intersection of gender-related, cultural, and economic barriers that impede their personal and professional growth, the lecture examines the socioeconomic difficulties faced by B40 women in Malaysia. According to Nurul, Nadzirah, and Nasir (2024), the B40 group, which comprises the lowest 40% of Malaysia's income earners, faces numerous difficulties because of their limited financial resources, low educational attainment, unstable employment, and poor access to healthcare. These challenges are especially severe for young mothers, who must simultaneously manage a financial environment that limits their opportunities for advancement and provide care (Erika et al., 2022).

The lecture's examination of the combined challenges B40 women face—particularly when financial exclusion and gender discrimination coexist—is a crucial component. According to Panda's (2018) research, these women encounter obstacles when trying to obtain the credit and resources necessary for starting their own businesses, and social prejudices prevent them from advancing in their careers or businesses. Many women are prevented from progressing

in the business world or workforce by the combination of these problems, which creates a stifling environment that limits the initiation and sustainability of entrepreneurship (Priya, Sidana, & Rathi, 2024).

The cultural expectations surrounding motherhood in Malaysia are also clarified by the lecture. Young mothers are put in a challenging position by these expectations since society expects them to put their family's needs ahead of their own career or business goals (Nur Jannah, 2023). This pressure is especially harmful because it prevents women from taking advantage of opportunities that could support their skill development, networking, or business endeavours. Long-term economic empowerment is hampered for many young mothers by prioritizing childcare duties over their own professional or business goals (Angie & Speer, 2023).

In order to address these interconnected issues, (Marijke & Els, 2020). stresses the necessity of a comprehensive strategy that prioritizes gender equality laws, targeted financial aid, and flexible work or entrepreneurial opportunities (Programs that provide remote work opportunities, reasonably priced childcare, or support for entrepreneurs can alleviate the strain of caregiving and enable young mothers to concurrently pursue their personal and professional objectives (Amrita, 2022). A more inclusive environment for women in the B40 group would also be created by the creation of policies that support gender inclusivity and fair access to financial resources, which would aid in removing the obstacles of societal and financial exclusion (Aini, Shadiya, & Akbariah, 2018).

(Noraini & Juhary, 2023). concludes by highlighting the intricate intersectionality of issues that B40 women in Malaysia, especially young mothers, face. Creating an atmosphere that enables these women to overcome societal, cultural, and economic barriers through community support and policy interventions is essential to empowering this group. By doing this, Malaysia can unleash the potential of its B40 women and promote an inclusive society in which everyone has the chance to prosper and make a contribution to the economy, regardless of gender or income For B40 women in Malaysia to succeed and be empowered over the long term, government policies, community programs, and private sector initiatives play a critical role in creating these opportunities (Sutariyonossi et al., 2021; Lina et al., 2024).

(Nor, 2015). provides a comprehensive examination of the socio-economic challenges that women in Malaysia, particularly those living in the Klang Valley, are confronted with The B40 demographic refers to the bottom forty percent of the population, and the women who fall into this category frequently face significant obstacles associated with social inequality, limited access to education, and precarious financial situations (Koh et al., 2020). In this context, the ability to manage one's emotions becomes absolutely necessary for overcoming the challenges they face on a daily basis and enhancing their quality of life (Goleman, 1995). Within the context of this particular group, the lecture offers a fresh perspective through which to comprehend the dynamic relationship that exists between socio-economic empowerment and emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). This lecture provides an insightful and comprehensive examination of the critical role that emotional intelligence plays in addressing socio-economic challenges (Mayer et al., 2008). It focuses on exploring emotional management skills among B40 women, emphasizing how they can benefit from developing emotional intelligence to cope with adversity and enhance their well-being (Zeidner et al.,

2012). Emotional management is a crucial skill for individuals navigating adversity, and this lecture highlights how this is the case. The discussion revolves around the ways in which the ability to manage one's emotions can not only positively impact well-being but also contribute to success in social and professional settings (Gross & John, 2003).

B40 Women in Klang Valley: Socio-Economic Challenges

The Klang Valley, Malaysia's most urbanized area, encompasses the capital, Kuala Lumpur, and its adjacent regions. The region exhibits economic development, yet there exists a pronounced disparity between affluent urban locales and less prosperous districts. Women in the B40 demographic within this region frequently encounter obstacles stemming from poverty, insufficient education, and restricted economic mobility. A significant number of B40 women engage in low-paying employment within the informal sector, including domestic work, retail, and food services, often holding multiple jobs to sustain their livelihoods (Hariz & Tasha, 2020). Furthermore, the cost of living in the Klang Valley is comparatively elevated, intensifying the financial burden on low-income families. These factors may result in elevated stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion (Cheng & Tan, 2023).

Family dynamics significantly influence the emotional experiences of B40 women. Numerous individuals serve as primary carers for children and elderly relatives, and these obligations, combined with financial strain, frequently result in feelings of burnout, frustration, and a sense of helplessness (Husna & Norhayati, 2022). Under these conditions, emotional regulation is crucial for preserving mental health and averting emotional overwhelm (Wahida & Aini, 2021).

Furthermore, cultural expectations and gender roles in Malaysian society introduce an additional layer of complexity. Women, particularly those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, may encounter societal pressure to adhere to conventional caregiving roles, often to the detriment of their personal well-being. Such expectations may lead to emotional suppression, as B40 women might feel compelled to prioritize the needs of others above their own (Ismail & Rahman, 2021). In this context, cultivating emotional intelligence, especially the capacity to manage and regulate emotions, can provide women with the resources necessary to assert their autonomy, transcend restrictive societal norms, and navigate their socio-economic circumstances with enhanced resilience (Nurul & Taufiq, 2023).

Emotional Management Skills as a Coping Mechanism

Emotional management skills equip B40 women in Klang Valley with a means to navigate daily stressors and emotional difficulties. The capacity to manage emotions—especially adverse emotions like stress, frustration, and anger—enables women to sustain emotional stability in the face of external pressures (Cheng & Tan, 2023). In the Klang Valley, where economic difficulties coincide with elevated social expectations, emotional regulation enables B40 women to prevent emotional exhaustion and sustain a sense of agency in their lives (Hariz & Tasha, 2020).

A practical application of emotional management in this context is the regulation of stress and anxiety. A significant number of B40 women in the Klang Valley are tasked with household management, frequently under constrained financial circumstances. The stress of balancing

work, caregiving, and financial responsibilities can be overwhelming, and in the absence of emotional regulation skills, these stressors may result in burnout or mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety (Ismail & Rahman, 2021). By cultivating emotional regulation, women can mitigate the effects of stressors, enabling them to make more lucid decisions and engage in problem-solving instead of succumbing to negative emotions (Nurul & Taufiq, 2023).

Moreover, emotional intelligence is pivotal in interpersonal relationships. Within the context of B40 women in Klang Valley, these individuals frequently depend on familial and communal networks for assistance. Nonetheless, the difficulties of caregiving and financial pressure may result in disputes or miscommunications within households. Emotional regulation abilities, including empathy and proficient communication, can assist women in managing these relationships more adeptly, minimizing conflicts, and enhancing support networks (Husna & Norhayati, 2022). For instance, articulating emotions non-confrontationally can avert escalating tensions within the household and foster understanding and collaboration among family members (Wahida & Aini, 2021).

Empowering B40 Women Through Emotional Intelligence

Emotional management encompasses not only the ability to navigate challenges but also the facilitation of empowerment. The cultivation of emotional intelligence, especially emotional regulation, can empower B40 women in the Klang Valley, granting them a sense of agency and control over their lives (Cheng & Tan, 2023). Empowered women are more capable of proactively enhancing their socio-economic status by pursuing education, seeking superior employment opportunities, or advocating for their rights across various domains (Hariz & Tasha, 2020).

Emotional intelligence can assist women in asserting themselves in professional environments, where gender biases and economic disadvantages may impede their progress. By cultivating emotional regulation skills, B40 women can confront workplace challenges such as discrimination, substandard working conditions, or inadequate wages with resilience and strategic acumen (Ismail & Rahman, 2021). Instead of yielding to frustration or despair, individuals can harness their emotional responses to inspire productive actions, such as negotiating improved working conditions, pursuing further training, or investigating alternative employment opportunities (Nurul & Taufiq, 2023).

Moreover, emotional regulation skills are crucial for personal development. The capacity to identify and manage emotions like self-doubt or fear of failure can assist women in overcoming the obstacles of low self-esteem frequently associated with economic disadvantage. When B40 women in the Klang Valley effectively manage feelings of inadequacy or fear, they are more inclined to pursue personal and professional development, such as enrolling in skill-building programs, initiating small businesses, or seeking mentorship and guidance (Wahida & Aini, 2021)

The Importance of Emotional Management in Socio-Economic Contexts

The lecture begins by establishing the socio-economic context in which B40 women live—often dealing with financial strain, caregiving responsibilities, and limited access to resources. In this environment, emotional management becomes a vital tool for coping with stress, managing relationships, and navigating personal and professional challenges. The speaker emphasizes that for B40 women, emotional management is not just about self-regulation in

the traditional sense, but also about understanding and leveraging emotions in ways that enable resilience and decision-making under pressure (Amrita, 2022).

One of the core arguments is that emotional regulation allows women to transform negative emotions, such as anxiety, frustration, or helplessness, into actionable steps for personal growth. For example, emotional awareness and regulation can help women cope with feelings of discouragement or fear of failure, which are common in situations where socio-economic mobility is limited. By learning how to manage these emotions, women can make decisions that move them closer to their goals, rather than being paralyzed by their emotional responses (Priya et al., 2024).

The lecture commences by delineating the socio-economic context in which B40 women reside, frequently contending with financial constraints, caregiving obligations, and restricted access to resources (Sutariyonossi et al., 2021). In this context, emotional regulation is an essential instrument for alleviating stress, managing interpersonal relationships, and addressing personal and professional obstacles. The speaker asserts that for B40 women, emotional management transcends conventional self-regulation, encompassing the comprehension and utilisation of emotions to foster resilience and facilitate decision-making in high-pressure situations (Wahida & Aini, 2021).

A fundamental argument is that emotional regulation enables women to convert negative emotions, such as anxiety, frustration, or helplessness, into constructive actions for personal development (Angie & Speer, 2023). Emotional awareness and regulation can assist women in managing feelings of discouragement or fear of failure, prevalent in contexts of restricted socio-economic mobility. By mastering the management of these emotions, women can make decisions that advance them towards their objectives, rather than being immobilised by their emotional reactions (Noraini & Juhary, 2023).

Building Emotional Awareness and Perception

Discern and precisely identify emotions in oneself and others. Emotional awareness is essential for emotional regulation as it enables individuals to recognise the reasons behind their feelings (Goleman, 1995). This skill is particularly essential for B40 women. The lecture highlights that women experiencing socio-economic difficulties may be more susceptible to emotional suppression, either due to the perceived obligation to remain resilient for their families or due to insufficient resources to meet their emotional needs (Amrita, 2022).

Consequently, cultivating emotional awareness may serve as the initial step in enhancing emotional management competencies (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The lecture elucidates how B40 women can gain advantages from training that promotes awareness of their emotional states and identification of patterns in their reactions to stressors. Identifying emotions such as anxiety or stress enables women to adopt proactive measures, whether through self-care strategies, obtaining social support, or employing stress-reduction techniques (Angie & Speer, 2023).

Regulating Emotions to Enhance Well-being and Social Interaction

(Gross, 2002) refer to emotional regulation—the ability to manage and control emotions to improve well-being and foster positive social interactions For B40 women, effective emotional

management is essential for maintaining mental health and nurturing healthy relationships. The speaker underscores that women in lower socio-economic strata often juggle multiple roles, such as caregiver, employee, and community participant, making emotional regulation vital for balancing these demanding responsibilities (Thompson & O'Neal, 2021).

B40 women often face external stressors, including poverty, discrimination, and familial pressure, which can exacerbate emotional reactions (Panda, 2018). Therefore, learning to regulate emotions through strategies such as mindfulness, cognitive reframing, or other techniques can help these women reduce emotional reactivity and make more thoughtful decisions (Gross & John, 2003). For example, when confronted with a setback in their career or business, the ability to regulate emotions—such as frustration or disappointment—can help women focus on finding solutions rather than being overwhelmed by negative feelings. Additionally, emotional regulation plays a crucial role in enhancing interpersonal relationships, which are key to both personal and professional success. For B40 women, effective emotional regulation can boost empathy and communication skills, contributing to the development of strong social networks that provide critical support in navigating socio-economic challenges (Karreman & Thijs, 2012).

The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Empowerment and Decision-Making

Emotional intelligence, particularly emotional regulation, plays a pivotal role in empowerment. For B40 women, acquiring emotional management skills can provide them with the tools to gain control over their circumstances and make decisions that align with their long-term goals (Goleman, 1995). By developing emotional intelligence, individuals can navigate challenging social situations, mediate conflicts, and negotiate effectively key skills for success in both personal and professional domains (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

B40 women often face situations that require them to advocate for their rights, whether in the workplace, healthcare, or family contexts. The ability to regulate emotions and respond strategically, rather than react impulsively, can significantly enhance the effectiveness of these advocacy efforts (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). Furthermore, the development of emotional regulation fosters resilience, an essential trait for women who experience ongoing socio-economic challenges. Resilient individuals are better equipped to persist in the face of adversity and pursue opportunities for personal and professional growth (Reivich & Shatté, 2002).

Practical Approaches to Enhancing Emotional Management Skills

To enhance emotional management skills among B40 women, various pragmatic strategies are essential, including emotional intelligence training, community initiatives that foster emotional awareness, and personal techniques such as mindfulness, journaling, or therapy (Goleman, 1995). Creating supportive environments where women can share experiences and engage in mutual learning is crucial. Social support, coupled with emotional regulation skills, can significantly bolster a woman's ability to navigate her socio-economic challenges (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

Policymakers and social organizations have a vital role in promoting emotional intelligence within this demographic by providing resources for emotional education and facilitating access to mental health support (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). Investing in emotional well-being can empower communities to help B40 women overcome the socio-economic

challenges they face, thereby fostering greater resilience and socio-economic mobility (Reivich & Shatté, 2002).

Perceiving Emotions

Emotional perception is the capacity to accurately identify and interpret emotions in oneself and others. This fundamental skill is essential as it underpins all other emotional intelligence competencies (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). For B40 women, cultivating this skill can markedly improve their emotional awareness and enable them to respond more adeptly to their own emotional states and those of others. Identifying one's emotions enables individuals to comprehend their internal conditions, which is crucial for regulating stress, anxiety, or frustration—prevalent emotions in socio-economic difficulties (Goleman, 1995). A B40 woman who identifies feelings of overwhelm can proactively manage her stress through relaxation techniques or by seeking support from others.

The capacity to discern emotions in others is equally significant. This ability can enhance interpersonal relationships, particularly in situations where social support is essential (Caruso & Salovey, 2004). By comprehending the emotions of others, B40 women can cultivate more empathetic and supportive relationships within their families, workplaces, and communities. If a woman can discern when a colleague is experiencing frustration or anxiety, she can provide support, encouragement, or a listening ear, thereby enhancing social connections and fostering a more collaborative atmosphere. Accurate emotional perception in both personal and professional contexts fosters trust and rapport, establishing a basis for emotional resilience (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008).

Facilitating Thought Using Emotions

Facilitating cognition through emotions denotes the capacity to leverage emotional experiences to prioritize thought and augment cognitive functions. Emotions serve as potent motivators, directing attention and concentration towards what is paramount (Bechara & Damasio, 2005). For B40 women, mastering the ability to convert emotions like excitement, passion, or frustration into constructive thought can be a transformative skill. For instance, enthusiasm regarding a novel business prospect or professional objective can stimulate innovative thinking and problem-solving, whereas exasperation with a challenge may compel an individual to explore alternative solutions or persevere through obstacles (Gross, 2002). The capacity to utilize emotions as cognitive instruments aids in decision-making and task prioritization, which is crucial when confronting numerous responsibilities or constraints (Carver, 2004).

Moreover, enabling cognition through emotions necessitates comprehending the function of emotions in cognitive flexibility. For B40 women, who frequently balance various roles (such as carer, employee, community leader), the ability to transition emotional focus between tasks can enhance efficiency and decision-making (Schmeichel, 2007). When effectively managed, emotions can enhance cognitive functions including memory, attention, and problem-solving, enabling B40 women to confront challenges with clarity and focus (Isen, 2000). By recognizing emotions as integral to the cognitive process rather than perceiving them as distractions, women from socio-economically disadvantaged groups can leverage their emotional responses to drive advancement in both personal and professional domains (Barrett, 200

Understanding Emotions

Emotional understanding entails the capacity to interpret emotional language and the intricate interconnections between various emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). This encompasses understanding the progression of emotions over time and their interactions with each other. For B40 women, comprehending their own emotions and the surrounding emotional dynamics is essential for navigating the complexities of their lives. A woman may experience a blend of emotions, including joy and guilt, upon achieving success while bearing the burden of her socio-economic challenges. Understanding that emotions are dynamic and frequently complex allows women to more effectively manage ambivalence or contradictory feelings (Larsen & McGraw, 2011).

Furthermore, comprehending the context of emotions is essential for proficient emotional regulation. When a B40 woman recognizes that feelings of fear or insecurity are prevalent when confronting new opportunities or challenges, she can implement strategies to regulate these emotions and proceed nonetheless (Gross, 2002). Recognizing that emotions have causes and can evolve over time allows individuals to predict how they might feel in future situations, thus preparing them to respond thoughtfully. Recognizing that pre-interview anxiety is a common experience can assist women in concentrating on preparation instead of succumbing to negative emotions. By analyzing emotions with greater nuance, B40 women can mitigate emotional distress and make more informed decisions, even in highly charged situations (Schmeichel, 2007).

Managing Emotions

Emotional management denotes the capacity to effectively regulate emotional experiences to attain personal and social objectives (Tamir, 2016). For B40 women, mastering emotional regulation is arguably the paramount aspect of emotional intelligence, particularly in light of the external pressures stemming from socio-economic challenges. Emotion regulation is essential for sustaining mental health and preventing emotional exhaustion, frequently encountered in response to stressors like financial insecurity, caregiving responsibilities, or work-life discord (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Emotion regulation enables individuals to maintain composure, concentration, and resilience, even amidst challenges.

Effective emotion regulation encompasses the management of negative emotions, such as anger, frustration, or sadness, as well as the cultivation of positive emotions, including optimism, hope, or gratitude (Ong et al., 2018). For B40 women, nurturing positive emotions can enhance resilience and a sense of agency, aiding them in surmounting challenges. By addressing feelings of helplessness and substituting them with a sense of purpose or hope, women can persist in pursuing their goals (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). Methods such as mindfulness, cognitive reframing, and soliciting social support can assist in emotional regulation, enabling women to remain focused and intentional (Zeidner et al., 2012).

Furthermore, regulating emotions is essential for establishing and sustaining relationships. Emotional regulation enhances individuals' communication efficacy, facilitates conflict resolution, and mitigates overreactions in challenging circumstances (Brackett et al., 2006). For B40 women, emotional regulation can improve personal relationships, including those with family and friends, as well as professional interactions with colleagues and employers. By maintaining emotional stability, women can foster environments conducive to

collaboration, empathy, and mutual support, resulting in enhanced personal fulfillment and social cohesion (Gross, 2015). This skill enables women to address challenges strategically instead of reacting impulsively, thereby fostering long-term success and well-being (Mayer et al., 2008).

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two key frameworks: Emotional Intelligence (EI), as proposed by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and later expanded by Goleman, and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive lens to explore the development of emotional competencies and the contextual factors influencing them.

Emotional Intelligence Framework

The concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI) highlights the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions in oneself and others. Salovey and Mayer (1990) introduced EI with four dimensions, while Goleman expanded it into five domains:

1. **Self-awareness:** The ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions.
 2. **Self-regulation:** The ability to control or redirect disruptive emotions and impulses.
 3. **Motivation:** A passion for pursuing goals with energy and persistence, beyond external rewards.
 4. **Empathy:** The ability to understand and share the feelings of others.
 5. **Social skills:** Proficiency in managing relationships and building effective networks.
- These domains encompass key emotional competencies:

1. **Perceiving Emotions:** Recognizing emotions in oneself and others through cues like facial expressions and tone of voice. This foundational skill helps navigate social interactions and foster meaningful relationships.
2. **Facilitating Thought:** Using emotions to guide thinking and enhance problem-solving. Positive emotions can expand attention and creativity, while managing negative emotions improves focus and decision-making.
3. **Understanding Emotions:** Comprehending emotional patterns and transitions, which is essential for anticipating reactions and adapting interpersonal behaviors.
4. **Managing Emotions:** Regulating emotions to achieve goals and sustain relationships. This advanced skill integrates self-regulation and influencing others, correlating with better mental health and professional success.

Additionally, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory provides a contextual lens, highlighting how individual, interpersonal, and societal factors interact to shape emotional management skills. This ecological perspective highlights that human development is not linear but a complex process that is continually shaped by the interplay of various environmental factors.

Ecological Systems Perspective

In addition to the Emotional Intelligence framework, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory offers a contextual lens for this study. This theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of various environmental systems that influence an individual's development:

- **Microsystem:** Immediate relationships and settings, such as family and peers, that directly impact emotional management.

- **Mesosystem:** Interactions between different microsystems, such as the relationship between workplace and family dynamics.
- **Exosystem:** External environments that indirectly affect the individual, such as community support services and societal norms.
- **Macrosystem:** Broader cultural and societal influences, including gender roles and economic policies.
- **Chronosystem:** The dimension of time, highlighting how life transitions and historical contexts impact emotional management.

Integration of EI and Ecological Systems Theory

1. **Ecological Systems and EI Development:** Emotional Intelligence is developed and cultivated within the various ecological layers of the individual's environment. For example, within the microsystem (family, school), children learn and refine emotional skills through interactions with caregivers and peers. These early emotional experiences, in turn, affect how children respond to other systems such as the mesosystem (connections between school and home) and exosystem (parental work environments).
2. **Social Skills Across Contexts:** Social skills, a key component of EI, are influenced by the different ecological contexts in which individuals find themselves. For example, a child's social interactions in school (microsystem) may be influenced by societal norms and policies (macrosystem), which determine how emotions are expressed and managed in social settings.
3. **Time and Emotional Development:** The chronosystem in Bronfenbrenner's model highlights the temporal dimension of development. Emotional intelligence, like other competencies, evolves over time. As individuals move through various life stages, they interact with different systems that influence the development of emotional skills. A teenager's ability to regulate emotions may differ from that of a preschooler, reflecting both the maturation of EI and the changing social systems they encounter.
4. **Empathy and Societal Influence:** The broader macrosystem encompasses cultural norms that affect how empathy is fostered and expressed. For instance, a society that values collectivism may encourage individuals to develop empathy in ways that differ from a society that emphasizes individualism. These cultural influences affect how emotional competencies are nurtured across different ecological systems.

Integration of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Emotional Intelligence

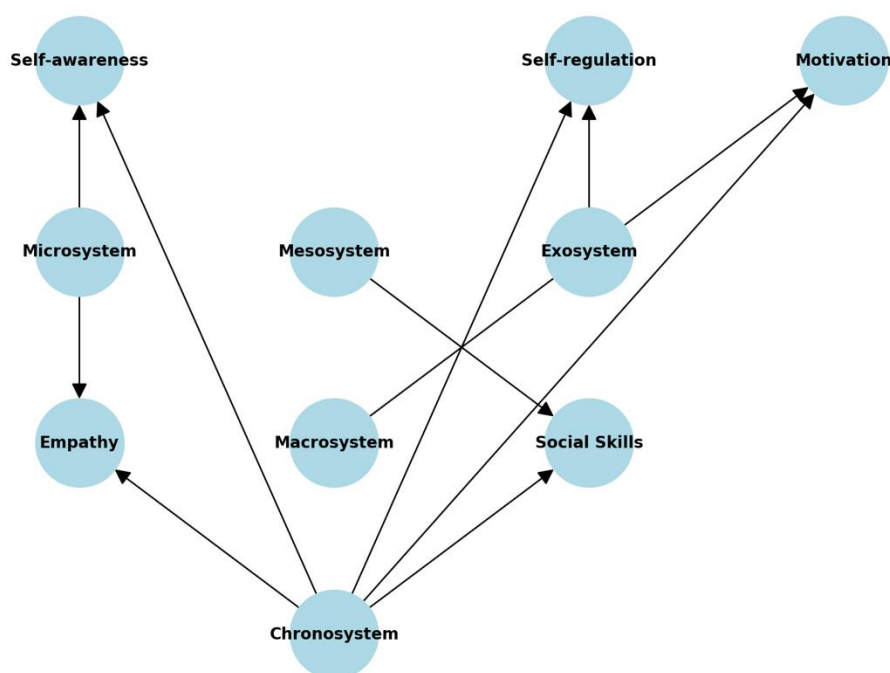


Diagram 1: Integration of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory and Emotional intelligence

This diagram depicts the amalgamation of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and the Emotional Intelligence (EI) framework. The interrelations among ecological systems (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem) and the elements of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills) illustrate the complementary nature of these theories in comprehending human development and emotional competencies across diverse contexts

Sampling Techniques

The study will use a purposive sampling technique to select B40 women in the Klang Valley. This method is chosen as it allows for the intentional selection of participants who meet specific criteria: women aged 18-50 from the B40 demographic, defined by a monthly household income of RM4,849 or less. The sample will target individuals who experience socio-economic challenges, including those involved in caregiving, low-paying informal sector jobs, or facing barriers to socio-economic mobility. Participants will be identified through collaboration with community centers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and local social media platforms, ensuring the inclusion of women from diverse backgrounds and varying levels of engagement in emotional regulation and resilience-building activities. This approach allows for the exploration of a wide range of emotional management experiences among women in the region.

Data Collection

Data collection will be conducted using a mixed-methods approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions. This will involve:

- Qualitative Interviews: Semi-structured interviews with 20-30 young mothers to gain insights into their personal experiences, attitudes toward entrepreneurship, perceived social

norms, and perceived behavioral control. The interviews will also explore challenges faced, existing support systems, and potential strategies for overcoming barriers. These interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and analyzed thematically to identify common patterns and key themes that relate to the TPB constructs.

- **Surveys:** A structured questionnaire will be distributed to 150 young mothers, designed to quantitatively assess attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The survey will incorporate validated scales adapted to the Malaysian context to ensure reliability and relevance. The survey will include both closed-ended questions to capture quantitative data and Likert-scale items to gauge the strength of the participants' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions. The collected data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to determine the relationships between TPB constructs and entrepreneurial intentions.

Data Analysis

The data analysis will be conducted in two phases: qualitative analysis for the interview data and quantitative analysis for the survey data.

- **Qualitative Data Analysis:**

The semi-structured interview data will be analyzed using thematic analysis and coding techniques:

1. **Coding:** The transcriptions will be manually coded or analyzed using qualitative data software (e.g., NVivo). This will help identify key themes and patterns related to emotional regulation, socio-economic challenges, and emotional intelligence.
2. **Thematic Analysis:** The codes will be grouped into themes, focusing on areas such as emotional awareness, coping strategies, and the impact of socio-economic stressors on emotional regulation. These themes will be interpreted within the context of the Emotional Intelligence framework and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory.

- **Quantitative Data Analysis:**

The survey data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis:

1. **Descriptive Statistics:** Frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations will summarize demographic characteristics (e.g., age, education, income) and emotional intelligence scores across the four dimensions (perceiving, facilitating thought, understanding, and managing emotions).
2. **Regression Analysis:** Multiple regression analysis will identify key predictors of emotional regulation, exploring how socio-economic factors (e.g., income, education level) impact emotional intelligence, while controlling for other variables.

These analyzes will be integrated to offer a comprehensive understanding of how socio-economic factors influence emotional intelligence and emotional regulation skills among B40 women in the Klang Valley.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will guide the data analysis:

Based on the theoretical framework outlined, here are some potential hypotheses for the study:

1. **Hypothesis 1:** There is a positive relationship between socio-economic status (income level) and emotional intelligence among B40 women in the Klang Valley. Specifically,

women with higher levels of income will demonstrate higher emotional intelligence, particularly in the areas of perceiving emotions and managing emotions.

2. **Hypothesis 2:** Educational attainment is positively correlated with emotional intelligence among B40 women in the Klang Valley. Women with higher education levels will demonstrate stronger abilities in understanding and facilitating thought through emotions.
3. **Hypothesis 3:** Stronger social support networks are associated with higher emotional regulation skills among B40 women in the Klang Valley. Women who report having more robust social support will be better able to manage emotions, leading to improved mental well-being and decision-making.
4. **Hypothesis 4:** Cultural and gender norms negatively influence emotional regulation skills among B40 women in the Klang Valley. Women who face more significant cultural and societal expectations related to caregiving and emotional labor will exhibit lower emotional regulation skills, particularly in managing emotions under stress.
5. **Hypothesis 5:** Emotional intelligence, particularly emotional regulation, mediates the relationship between socio-economic stressors (e.g., financial strain, caregiving responsibilities) and mental health outcomes (e.g., anxiety, depression) in B40 women. This suggests that better emotional regulation can mitigate the negative effects of socio-economic stress on mental health.

Implications

This conceptual framework endeavours to offer a comprehensive comprehension of the factors that influence emotional management skills among B40 women by incorporating these theoretical perspectives. It also establishes the foundation for the creation of targeted interventions that address both individual competencies and systemic barriers, thereby fostering empowerment and resilience.

Implication

This study has substantial implications for mental health practitioners, educators, community leaders, and policymakers. By emphasising the critical role of emotional management skills in improving the well-being and resilience of B40 women, the study emphasises the necessity of systemic reforms and targeted interventions.

Policy Development: This investigation establishes a basis for the development of policies that are designed to incorporate emotional intelligence training into educational curricula and community programs. Accessible mental health resources and skill-building initiatives that are specifically designed for B40 women should be the primary focus of policies.

Program Design and Implementation: Organisations that collaborate with marginalised populations may leverage the results to develop initiatives that improve emotional awareness, regulation, and resilience. The long-term benefits for individuals and their communities can be achieved by integrating emotional intelligence modules into existing empowerment programs.

Community Empowerment: This study contributes to the broader endeavour of promoting community resilience by providing women with the necessary skills to effectively manage

their emotions. Women who are emotionally empowered have the potential to serve as catalysts for positive change in their families and communities.

Educational Impact: The incorporation of emotional management training into adult education programs and schools can address generational challenges, allowing younger generations to develop emotional intelligence and resilience at a young age.

Future Research: This conceptual framework establishes the foundation for future empirical research that can verify and enhance the strategies that have been suggested. The longitudinal impact of emotional intelligence training on the mental health outcomes and socio-economic mobility of B40 women can be further investigated through additional research.

Conclusion

This paper, *Exploring Emotional Management Skills Among B40 Women*, provides an in-depth and practical examination of how emotional intelligence (EI), particularly emotional management, can be a transformative tool for women in lower socio-economic groups. By enhancing the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions, B40 women can better navigate their daily challenges, build resilience, strengthen relationships, and make more informed decisions across all areas of life. Emotional intelligence is presented not only as an individual skill but as a critical enabler of social and economic empowerment. For B40 women in the Klang Valley, mastering EI can improve mental health, cultivate robust social networks, and empower them to address socio-economic challenges effectively. Programs that focus on fostering emotional awareness and regulation can mitigate the adverse effects of stressors, enabling these women to create opportunities for personal growth, social mobility, and empowerment. Social and community support structures emphasizing EI development are pivotal in unlocking their potential and fostering a resilient future.

IT integrates Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and the Emotional Intelligence framework to offer a nuanced perspective on human development. It highlights the interplay between emotional competencies and the various ecological systems shaping individuals' lives. Both theories emphasize the critical role of context in shaping personal growth, illustrating that emotional intelligence development is intricately tied to environmental and systemic influences. Future studies could delve deeper into how specific ecological factors, such as family dynamics or societal transitions, shape the development of EI across different life stages.

The four dimensions of emotional intelligence—Perceiving Emotions, Facilitating Thought Using Emotions, Understanding Emotions, and Managing Emotions—serve as a comprehensive framework for fostering emotional awareness and regulation, particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged groups like B40 women. Strengthening these competencies enables women to enhance their resilience, refine decision-making abilities, and improve interpersonal relationships. Emotional intelligence emerges not only as a tool for personal development but as a cornerstone for social and professional success, promoting overall well-being and facilitating the achievement of both individual and collective aspirations.

Strategies for Enhancing Emotional Management Skills

1. Community-Based Interventions:

- Establish peer support groups focused on sharing experiences and coping strategies.
- Conduct workshops on emotional intelligence tailored to the specific needs of B40 women.

2. Educational Programs:

- Integrate emotional management training into community education initiatives.
- Develop accessible resources, such as mobile applications or online modules, to teach emotional regulation techniques.

3. Policy Recommendations:

- Advocate for government-funded programs addressing mental health and emotional well-being.
- Provide financial incentives for organizations that offer emotional management training to employees.

4. Role of Technology:

- Leverage digital platforms to disseminate information and tools for emotional skill development.
- Use social media to create awareness and normalize discussions about emotional health.

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