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Identifying Emotional Intelligence Competencies among Malaysian Teacher Educators

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Abstract

The research purpose was to identify the core and critical Emotional Intelligence (EQ) competencies among teacher educators. This was a quantitative research conducted on 140 samples from Malaysia Institute of Teacher Education (MITE) to respond to the Malaysian Emotional Quotient Inventory (MEQI). The data was descriptively analysed using *SPSS 12.0*. The findings revealed that the samples had an average EQ competencies; highest scores on spirituality, followed by maturity, self-awareness, self-motivation, empathy, self-regulation, and social skills. Sixteen EQ sub-domains were considered as the core competencies and eleven as the critical competencies. EQ competencies contribute to teachers' role as a change catalyst.

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1. Introduction

EQ is a competency that can help individual to recognize and manage his own emotion and identify others' emotion and build good relationship with them (Goleman 1996). This competency is crucial in teachers' education services, in order to achieve the vision towards producing teachers with the world class quality based on moral values of Malaysian community. Local researchers had agreed that EQ is one of the main factor in generating

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excellent teachers' personality with a leadership quality (Noriah 2003, Syed Najmuddin 2005, Syafrimen 2004, & Rorlinda 2010). Goad (2005) and Justice (2005) highlighted the relation between EQ with work performance and teacher education. They found that EQ acts as a basic factor to the personal well-being and professional sustainability of the pre and in service teachers. This is due to the role of EQ in managing self, understanding others, managing relations between humans and interaction with the environment. Therefore, EQ competence is an essential need, especially for teacher educators as they are dealing with students (teacher trainees) from different background and various challenges in the working environment.

2. Problem Statement

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is a core competency in education profession services (Constantine & Gainor 2001; Easton 2004; & Stone, Parker & Wood 2005). Findings of EQ research on educators and lecturers showed that on overall, they have medium to high EQ's level (Mohd. Najib 2000; Author 2003; Syed Najmuddin 2005; Syafrimen 2008, & Author 2010). However, there are several lower EQ competencies among teacher educators such as emotional management, emotional domination, and influential ability (Rajagopal 2012) as well as critical EQ competencies such as changes catalyst competency, building relationship, conflict management, communication, and influential capability (Author 2010). Research findings have associated EQ with the effectiveness in leadership, work performance, human resource management, confidence, self-efficacy, stress, and mental health (Abdul Hamid 2005; Boyatzis 2002; Ghazali 2006; Mohd Azhar 2004; Mayer 1999, Rajagopal 2012; Author 2010, Syed Sofian & Rohany 2010; & Wan Ashibah 2003). EQ research on teacher education shows that lecturers faced high work pressure (Rajagopal 2012). This is supported by the finding of Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, Cuevas, & Lonsdale's (2014) study which shows that negative health-related outcomes in teachers were related to job pressure, psychological need thwarting, burnout, and somatic complaints. The pressures caused by emotional breakdown and depersonalization (burn out) due to irregular working hours, expectation of works beyond capabilities, and miscellaneous job scopes (Botherridge & Greenglass 2002; Taniza 2005). According to Muchinsky (2000), depression and prolonged emotional disorder would affect performance at work. Hence, previous research finding shows that EQ is an essential competency in producing quality and excellent performance among educators. Having high EQ would enable personal and social competencies to be able to handle stress and challenges professionally because EQ acts as perseverance support in teachers' professionalism (Author 2010). Hence, Mohd Najib (2000) suggested that teacher educators should have high emotional awareness as they are the trainer of future teachers. Moreover EQ competency and high confidence level of teachers' educators can be an example to the students who assume their teachers as the best role model. To sum up, the awareness of EQ competency should be identified in order to help teacher educators at Malaysia Institute of Teacher Education in enhancing personal and professional competence in upgrading the quality of teacher educators' professionalism.

3. Research Objective

Generally, this research is formed to look at personal criteria and professionalism of teacher educators from the aspect of emotional intelligence (EQ). A profile of emotional intelligence (EQ) of teacher educators is developed to identify the elements in core competency which can be strengthened and critical competency which needs to be developed. The research objectives include:

- i. Identifying the profile of emotional intelligence competency among teacher educators at Malaysia Institute of Teacher Education.
- ii. Identifying the core and critical competency of emotional intelligence among teacher educators at Malaysia Institute of Teacher Education.

4. Methodology

This study used a quantitative approach which involved survey research method to answer the research questions.

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