RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY ENGLISH TEST (MUET) ACHIEVEMENTS AND TRAIT EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (TRAIT EI) AMONG MATRICULATION STUDENTS.

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Abstract:
The number of matriculation candidates for Malaysian University English Test (MUET) has increased drastically, but the prestige of MUET achievements of MUET 2005-2011 has decreased drastically (Malaysian Examination Council, 2006). In Malaysia, (MUET) which is an entry test to university, was introduced to test the language proficiency in tertiary level. The Minister of Higher Education in Malaysia mentioned that most students who entered public universities have poor knowledge of English and the declining in English proficiency needs to be addressed immediately (The Star,27 Jan. 2007). The issues on the relationship between personality traits and academic achievements is becoming vital due to the claims by some researchers. An individual's success depends on 25% of their IQ and 80% on the effectiveness of how they manage their emotions in life (Goleman, 1995). Little has been done in the scope of trait EI model personality in education especially in Malaysian university matriculation level. An individual's personality traits are good predictors for academic performance. The research on trait EI has been scarce especially in Malaysia and there is no research done on trait EI and MUET in matriculation level. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to determine whether there is a correlation between MUET achievements and trait (EI) among matriculation students. This study investigated the relationship between (MUET) achievements and trait Emotional Intelligence (trait EI) among 677 students from medicine, dentistry, science technology, law and syariah and accountancy courses at matriculation center, University Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM). The participants were administrated the TEIQue-SF self report questionnaire which was used to elicit information on the respondents' trait EI which comprises Well being, Self control, Emotionality, Sociability and Global traits. Descriptive Statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to analyse the data. Pearson Correlation Analysis was used to analyze the correlation between MUET achievements and trait EI scores while Guilford's (1973) Rule of Thumb was used to determine the strength of the relationship. The results showed significant correlation between MUET achievements and trait EI based on: Well being, Emotionality, Sociability, Global traits and the total EI scores. Implications of the study are discussed and suggestions are given for further research.

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Introduction

MUET is an examination which tests listening, speaking, reading and writing. It classifies candidates according to six bands of achievement, from highly proficient user to very limited user (Malaysia Examination Council, 2006). It aims to equip students with the appropriate level of proficiency in English. Trait emotional intelligence or trait emotional self-efficacy essentially concerns about people's self perceptions of their emotional abilities (Petrides et al., 2007). Trait EI model of personality consists of 15 subscales organized under the four factors : Well-being, Self-Control, Emotionality, Sociability and Global Traits. Petrides and Furnham (2001). Petrides and Furnham (2002) examine the role of trait EI in academic performance and in deviant behavior at school on a sample of 650 British secondary school students. Their research demonstrated that trait EI moderated the relationship between cognitive ability and academic performance. Çetinkaya and Alparslan (2011) research claims the influence of EI on communicative skills among the Applied Technology and Management College students. However, only one of the emotional intelligence aspects, namely emphatic sensitivity, influences the communication skills at a statistically significant level. Reza Zabihi (2011) explored in his studies on the relationship between personality, English language proficiency, and achievement in foreign language classes. In his research, there was significant relationship between personality traits and proficiency as well as achievement scores. Nazan Yelkikalan et al. (2012) study mentioned on the emotional intelligence levels of university students; the difference in terms of demographic qualities, their majors and the relationship between EI and academic

achievements. The results of his findings demonstrated a significant relationship between the emotional intelligence and academic achievements. Noordin et al. (2010) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and students' academic achievement and determined the relationship between the problems faced by the students. Based on the results of his findings, there was a significance relationship . Habibollah et al. (2010) did a research on anxiety and speaking component among one hundred and fifty three Iranian undergraduate students in Malaysian Universities . Through his research, there was a moderate level of anxiety among the students in the speaking component. Azizi Yahya et al (2012) research on the Impact of Emotional Intelligence Element on Academic achievement identified whether the five elements of emotional intelligence have been able to contribute to academic achievement. The results of their findings revealed that the level of emotional intelligence contributes and enhances the cognitive abilities in student.

Objective of the Study

The major purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between MUET and trait (EI) which consists of 15 subscales organized under the four factors and global trait: Well being, Sociability, Emotionality, Self control and Global trait among matriculation students in USIM. Therefore, this study sets out to explore the following research questions.

1. Is there a significant relationship between MUET achievements and Well being among the matriculation students?
2. Is there a significant relationship between MUET achievements and Sociability among the matriculation students?
3. Is there a significant relationship between MUET achievements and Emotionality among the matriculation students?
4. Is there a significant relationship between MUET achievements and Self control among the matriculation students?
5. Is there a significant relationship between MUET achievements and Global Trait among the matriculation students?
6. Is there a significant relationship between MUET achievements and Total trait EI?

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Methodology

The researcher uses the correlation design to describe the statistical association between the two variable which are the MUET achievements and trai EI among the population as this research is designed to study the relationship between MUET achievements and Trait Emotional Intelligence among matriculation students in order to obtain an interpretation value of the correlation coefficient. The correlation coefficient will be measuring the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the two variables which are the Trait Emotional Intelligence and the USIM's matriculation students' MUET achievements. In this research, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient which is typically denoted by r is used which is the measure of the correlation (linear dependence) between two variables X and Y, giving a value between +1 and −1 inclusive. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is used in the sciences as a measure of the strength of linear dependence between two variables and it was developed by Karl Pearson from a similar but slightly different idea introduced by Francis Galton in the 1880s (Rodgers and Nicewander, 1988; Stigler and Stephen, 1989). The instrument used in this research is the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire, or TEIQue which is an openly accessible instrument developed to measure global trait emotional intelligence. According to the trait EI theory, the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire is a significant part of research in emotional intelligence (EI) (Petrides and Furnham, 2003). The questionnaire developed by Petrides, et al (2007) which is called Trait Emotional Intelligence Question- Short Form (TEIQue-SF) was to collect data for the data analysis. Baron-Cohen (1989a) mentioned that questionnaire as a self report instrument which is used for gathering information about variables of interest to an investigation for research purposes.

Findings

Through analyzing the data collection, the pilot study findings show no significant due to the limited number of students, but as for the actual study, there is significant relationship between MUET achievements and trait EI's factors which are: Well being, Sociability, Emotionality and Global Trait. According to the Pearson Correlation results for H1, the correlation coefficient (r) was 0.294. Based on Guildford's (1973) Rule of Thumb, this would suggest a positive and low relationship between MUET achievements and Wellbeing. The positive relationship indicated that an increase in Wellbeing could increase MUET achievements. The results also showed a significant value of p=.000 which is less than alpha at .05 level of significance. Therefore, the first null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant and positive relationship between MUET achievements and Wellbeing. According to the Pearson Correlation results for H2, the correlation coefficient (r) was 0.156. Based on Guildford's (1973) Rule of Thumb, this would suggest a positive and negligible relationship between MUET achievements and Sociability. The positive relationship indicated that an increase in Sociability could increase MUET achievements. The results also showed a significant value of p=.000 which is less than alpha at .05 level of significance. Therefore, the second null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant and positive relationship between MUET achievements and Sociability. According to the Pearson Correlation results for H3, the correlation coefficient (r) was 0.174. Based on Guildford's (1973) Rule of Thumb, this would suggest a positive and negligible relationship between MUET achievements and Emotionality. The positive relationship indicated that an increase in Emotionality could increase MUET achievements. The results also showed a significant value of p=.000 which is less than alpha at .05 level of significance. Therefore, the third null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant and positive relationship between MUET achievements and Emotionality. According to the Pearson Correlation results for H, 4 the correlation coefficient (r) was -.014. Based on Guildford's (1973) Rule of Thumb, this would suggest a negative and negligible relationship between MUET achievements and Self control of the matriculation students. The negative relationship indicates that a decrease in Self Control could lead to a decrease in MUET achievements. The results also showed a significant value of p=.722 which is more than alpha at .05 level of significance. Therefore, the fourth null hypothesis is failed to be rejected. That is, there was not sufficient evidence to support the hypothesis that the negative relationship between MUET achievements and Self Control is statistically significant. According to the Pearson Correlation results for H5, the correlation coefficient (r) was 0.133. Based on Guildford's (1973) Rule of Thumb, this would suggest a positive and negligible relationship between MUET achievements and Global trait. The positive relationship indicated that an increase in Global trait could increase MUET achievements. The results also showed a significant value of p=.001 which is less than alpha at .05 level of significance. Therefore, the fifth null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant and positive relationship between MUET achievements and Global trait. According to the Pearson Correlation results for H6, the correlation coefficient (r) was 0218. Based on Guildford's (1973) Rule of Thumb, this would suggest a positive and low relationship between MUET achievements and total trait EI. The positive relationship indicated that an increase in total trait EI could increase MUET achievements.. The results also showed a significant value of p=.000 which is less than alpha at .05 level of significance. Therefore, sixth null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant and positive relationship between MUET achievements and total trait EI. The overall data analysis for the mean of trait EI according to the MUET Band 1,2,3,4 and 5 are illustrated in the table below:

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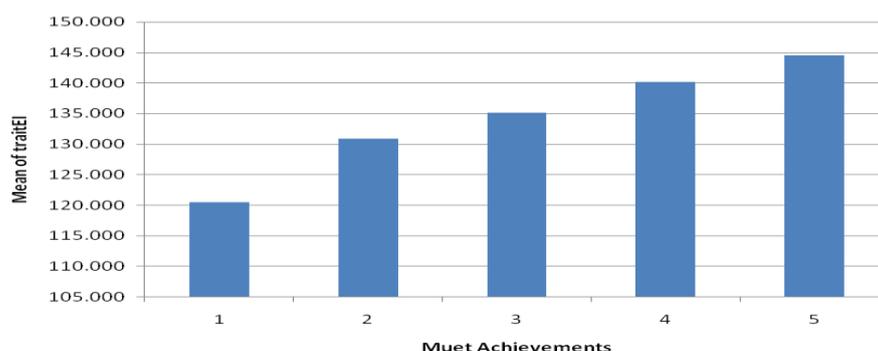
The overall data analysis for the mean of trait EI according to the MUET achievements among the matriculation students at USIM which was illustrated in the graph demonstrated that the higher their trait EI, the higher their MUET Band achievements. The findings of the research supported the claims of Noftle and Robins (2007, p. 116) who reported that ''.. .personality predicts academic performance.. .even when intelligence and cognitive ability are controlled'' and the importance of high emotional intelligence as a contribution factor in a student's learning process.(Goleman, 1996; Elias, Ubriaco, Reese et al., 1992, Svetlana,2007).

Conclusion

Michael et al. (2005) clarified that personality traits as one of the major, non cognitive individual difference domains in the field of psychology as the dispositional attributes are important because they influence numerous outcomes through motivational processes. The implications of the study covers both pedagogical and psychological perspective has it provides sound information to the Malaysian Examination Council (MEC) , educators, counselors, curriculum planners and future researchers. The researcher recommended that there should be a study using both ability EI and trait EI, to find the relationship between the four components of MUET and trait EI and also to study the relationship between the six levels of achievements and trait EI in a wider scope. The role of personality in academic performance needs further exploration as the issue is very complex and subtle. However, it is truly rewarding and beneficial for the students' self and profesional development.

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