

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: AN EMPIRICAL TEST AMONG MALAYSIANS

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Abstract: The significance of emotional intelligence (EQ) has been well mentioned and research in the organizational behavior literature. EQ has often been linked to effective leadership. Leaders possessing high degrees of emotional convictions are presumed to demonstrate high levels of self-confidence and the necessary skills to effectively manage interpersonal relationships. These and other qualities which constitute a leader's EQ would be very important if one were to gain respect and trust among followers or subordinates. Essentially, they are essential prerequisites in ensuring successful efforts to enhance individuals' motivation. A survey was conducted to assess the levels of EQ among Malaysians. The instrument used was the established Weisinger (1998) Emotional Intelligence Inventory. The survey managed to obtain responses from a sample of 354 individuals. Based on the data analyzed, average Malaysians were found to demonstrate a fairly high ability in the areas of providing advice and support to others, making others feel good, and knowing what senses he/she is currently practicing. However, Malaysians on average seemed to have low ability in staying calm when targeted by anger of others, associating physical cues with motion, and producing high energy when doing uninteresting work. On another note, although they could be said to be better able at social skills and self awareness, they are apparently less able in terms of self management and self motivation. These findings have implications for theory as well as managerial practice. Suggestions for future research are further discussed.

Keyword: Emotional intelligence, Effective leadership, Malaysians.

Introduction

One of life's paradoxes is in respect of "high" academic intelligence. The usual and customary expectation is that an academically intelligent person is bound to hold a high position in society, usually as a leader. But yet we find that across all spectrums of the society, leaders are seldom the most academically accomplished. In the case of Malaysia, more often than not, leaders are typically people who are relatively less successful in terms of paper qualifications. But this phenomenon is not unique to Malaysia. In this regard, even in the U.S., Goleman (1995, pg. 38) observes that "... academic intelligence offers virtually no preparation – or opportunity – life's vicissitudes bring. Yet even though a high IQ is no guarantee of prosperity, prestige, or happiness in life, our schools and our culture fixate on academic abilities, ignoring emotional intelligence, a set of traits – some might call it character – that also matters immensely for our personal destiny. Emotional life is a domain that as sure as math or reading can be handled with greater or lesser skill, and requires its unique set of competencies.

The observation of Goleman not only encapsulates a common observation. While he may seemed to have effectively redefined the meaning of the word "smart" as we understand it with his introduction of the concept of emotional intelligence (EQ), the legitimate profoundly academic ring to it, is made possible by the new theory of multiple intelligence of Howard Gardner (1983). Breaking away from the pre-eminent single dimension concept of "intelligence quotient" or IQ of Alfred Binet, Gardner proposes that there are five other dimensions of human competency or intelligence. The dimensions are as follows;

Logical/mathematical – which processes analytically, calculates and quantify.

Verbal/linguistic – which gives thought through words and uses words to nurture.

Intrapersonal – which is characterized by the act of thinking in quiet, likes to be alone, goal oriented, independent and perseveres.

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Interpersonal – competency through which one understands others, processes through interaction, emphasizes, and humor.

Visual/spatial – uses mental models, thinks three dimensionally, pictures how to get places or solve problems.

Musical – sensitivity to pitch, melody, rhythm, found in both performers and listeners.

Bodily/kinesthetics – physical movement, involves whole body, processes by jumping or dancing.

1. Definition of Emotional Intelligence

Goleman's theory of EQ strats on the premise that there two kinds of intelligence – intellectual and emotional – express the activity of different parts of the brain. The intellect is based solely on the working of the neocortex, the more recently evolved layers at the top of the brain. The emotional centers are lower in the brain, in the more ancient subcortex; emotional intelligence involves the emotional centers at work, in concert with other intellectual centers. Operationally EQ is defined as “ the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships. (1995: p. 375)

According to Goleman, EQ is a set of personal skills comprising five components:

(i) Self awareness.

Self understanding; knowledge of true feeling at the moment. Knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources and situations. The competencies involve emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment and self confidence.

(ii) Self management

Handling one's emotion to facilitate rather than hinder the task at hand; shake of negative emotions and get back on constructive track for problem solution. Managing one;s internal states, impulses and resources. Competencies include self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability and innovation.

(iii) Self motivation

Stay on course to ward desired goal; overcome negative emotional impulses and delay gratification to attain the desired outcome. Emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals. Involves achievement drive, commitment, initiative, and optimism.

(iv) Empathy

Understand and be sensitive to the feelings of others; being able to sense what others feel and want. Awareness of others' feelings, needs and concerns. Involves understanding others, developing others, social orientation, leveraging diversity and political awareness.

(v) Social skills

The ability to read social situations; smooth in interacting with others and forming networks; able to guide others' emotions and the way they act. Adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others. Includes influence, communication, conflict management, change catalyst, building bonds, collaboration and cooperation and team capabilities i.e., creating group synergy in pursuing collective goals.

2. The State Of Eq Research In Malaysia

Literature survey suggests that there is not many published research on emotional intelligence in Malaysia. As such, despite the proliferation of universities in the country in the last ten years, and EQ being among the more existing theories and fields of research that emerged in the decade of the 1990s, we do not have much clue as how Malaysia is doing in respect of EQ. To the extent that we have scanty knowledge of the basics of EQ in the country, we actually do not understand how interpersonal relationship are handled. Which aspects of the EQ are we strong at, and in what respect are we weak in? What kind of “caring society” as envisage under the country’s vision 2020” are we going to have in the next decade?.

As mentioned earlier, the central impetus to this study is the realization that as a natural process the present generation of leaders will either retire from active engagements or reach the end of their lifespan. Sooner or later, the country will undergo a series of leadership successions in the important domains of politics, public administration, and economics. Despite the importance of impending events, casual observations suggest in all these domains, candidates have not been positively identified, nor have we any clue as to the style of leaders who will be taking over. The few preliminary questions about EQ are intended to hint the “richness” of the findings that we can expect from any research on EQ in Malaysia.

3. The Research Statement

The instrument employed in the survey to capture the pattern of EQ competencies among Malaysians was the Weisinger (1998) Emotional Intelligence Inventory. This instrument consists of 45 behaviour –based statements. Each statement is rated on a seven point Likert scale where at the extremes “1” means the person has low ability and “7” refers to the person has high ability. The scales in between the two extremes are not given descriptions, but are there for a respondent to choose from as he/she intuitively feels best describes him/herself. Although the inventory is by a different author, the theory underlying this instrument is similar to that of Goleman.

In interpreting the scores, this study follows the approach taken by Daft (1999) who modified the original Weisinger EQ Inventory, retaining only 25 questions to represent the five dimensions of the variable, and categorizing three bands of scores – low, average and high ability. In ranking of the scores, those in the lowest 25th. Percentile are deemed to have low ability, while those in the 75th percentile are deemed to have high ability. Those with scores falling between the stated range are deemed to be average.

The original Weisinger EQ Inventory is in English, and was translated into Bahasa Melayu. The resultant instrument was then pre-tested on a group of five lecturers and 20 students of a private high educational institute. Based on this survey, the instrument was found to have an internal reliability coefficient (Cronbach alpha) of 0.9244.

4. The Survey

The distribution of the Weisinger EQ Inventory was done simultaneously with the simple random survey on leadership targeting the Malaysian population in the age band of 16 years old through 60 years old. The survey was conducted with the help of students engaged as research assistants. These research assistants were sent to meet with potential respondents in all states of Peninsular Malaysia. In order to ensure randomness, the research assistants were instructed to approach respondents at all accessible locations: across as many districts as possible, and across public and private offices.

4.1. Results

Out of 900 respondents who were approached, 500 responded positively to participate in the survey. Out of this number, however, only 354 responses were found suitable for data capture and analysis.

4.2. Overview of Sample Characteristics

The gender breakdown of the sample is that 48.6% (172 respondents) are females and 51.4% (182) are males. The mean age of the respondents in the sample is 33.8 years old, with the male mean age at 35.7 years old, while the female mean age is 31.75 years old. The details are as in Tables 1 and 2, below.

Table 1: Distribution by Gender

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Female | 172 | 48.6 | 48.6 | 48.6 |
| | Male | 182 | 51.4 | 51.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 254 | 100 | 100 | |

Table 2: Mean Age by Gender

| Sex | Mean Age | N | Standard Deviation |
|--------|----------|-----|--------------------|
| Female | 31.7574 | 172 | 11.082 |
| Male | 35.7303 | 182 | 10.929 |
| Total | 33.7954 | 354 | 11.167 |

The ethnic composition of the sample is as follows; Malays 75.4% (267 respondents), Chinese 16.1% (57 respondents) and Indians 8.5% (30 respondents). The predominant academic qualifications of the respondents are as shown in Table 3. As shown in the Table, SPM/MCE 33.4% (113 respondents), diploma holders 18.6% (63 respondents), and first degree holders 13.9% (47 respondents).

Table 3: Distribution of Academic Qualification

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---------|-----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Primary School | 18 | 5.1 | 5.3 | 5.3 |
| | PMR/SRP/LCE | 35 | 9.9 | 10.4 | 16.3 |
| | SPM/MCE | 113 | 31.9 | 33.4 | 49.1 |
| | Sijil Kemahiran | 11 | 3.1 | 3.3 | 52.4 |
| | STPM/HSC | 43 | 12.1 | 12.7 | 65.1 |
| | Diploma | 63 | 17.8 | 18.6 | 87.7 |
| | First Degree | 47 | 13.3 | 13.9 | 97.6 |
| | Advanced Degree | 8 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 338 | 95.5 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | System | 16 | 4.5 | | |
| Total | | 354 | 100.0 | | |

In terms of the representation across the states, the sample is somewhat not representative as there is no respondent from Terengganu, a state in the North east of the Malaysian peninsula. The detailed distribution of the respondents according to their home states is given in Table 4.

In relation to employment, 58.2% (206 respondents) of the sample are salaried employees, 12.7% (45 respondents) are students, 7.3% (26 respondents) are self-employed (e.g. farmers and taxi drivers), and 6.5% (23 respondents) are business owners, 8.5% (30 respondents) had not responded to the question on employment. Unemployed and housewives make up 3.1% (11 respondents) and 3.7% (13 respondents) of the sample. The rest are either divorced, widowed or did not respond to the question. Members of a political party form 16.4% (58 respondents).

Table 4: Distribution by Home States

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---------|--------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Perlis | 37 | 10.5 | 10.6 | 10.6 |
| | Kedah | 23 | 6.5 | 6.6 | 17.1 |
| | Penang | 23 | 6.5 | 6.6 | 23.7 |
| | Perak | 13 | 3.7 | 3.7 | 27.4 |
| | Selangor | 36 | 10.2 | 10.3 | 37.7 |
| | Kuala Lumpur | 14 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 41.7 |
| | N.Sembilan | 23 | 6.5 | 6.6 | 48.3 |
| | Melaka | 42 | 11.9 | 12.0 | 60.3 |
| | Johor | 64 | 18.1 | 18.3 | 78.6 |
| | Pahang | 71 | 20.1 | 20.3 | 98.9 |
| | Kelantan | 1 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 99.1 |
| | Sabah | 3 | 0.8 | 0.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 350 | 98.9 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | | 4 | 1.1 | | |
| Total | | 354 | 100.0 | | |

Age Distribution and Its Characteristics

The distribution across age groups (10 altogether) ranging from 16 to 20 years old to those 61 years old and above is as reflected in Table 5. From the Table, it can be seen that the predominant age groups for the sample are the 21-25 years old, which made up 25.6% (89 respondents) of the total, followed by the 26 – 30 years old which accounted for 17.3% (60 respondents).

Table 5: Distribution by Age Group

| | Age group (Years) | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | 16-20 | 21 | 5.9 | 6.1 | 6.1 |
| | 21-25 | 89 | 25.1 | 25.6 | 31.7 |
| | 26-30 | 60 | 16.9 | 17.3 | 49.0 |
| | 31-35 | 37 | 10.5 | 10.7 | 59.7 |
| | 36-40 | 35 | 9.9 | 10.1 | 69.7 |
| | 41-45 | 35 | 9.9 | 10.1 | 79.8 |
| | 46-50 | 37 | 10.5 | 10.7 | 90.5 |
| | 51-55 | 24 | 6.8 | 6.9 | 97.4 |
| | 56-60 | 8 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 99.7 |
| | 61+ | 1 | .3 | .3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 347 | 98.0 | 100.0 | |
| | | 7 | 2.0 | | |
| | | 354 | 100.0 | | |

Raw Mean Scores Across the Weisinger EQ Inventory

The sorted mean score for each of the twenty questions in the modified Weisinger EQ Inventory is as shown in Table 6. The mean score across the 25 questions is 4.64, with the lowest mean score being 4.20 (Produce high energy when doing uninteresting work), and the highest mean score being 5.04 (Provide advice and support to others). Given the results of the survey, at the extremes, a practical interpretation of the mean raw scores is that, a Malaysian is not likely to be enthusiastic doing boring work, but is supportive of others.

Table 6: Sorted Mean Scores Across the Weisinger EQ Inventory

| Item measure | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----|------|----------------|
| Provide advice and support to others | 354 | 5.04 | 1.39 |
| Make others feel good | 355 | 4.98 | 1.30 |
| Know what senses you are currently using | 355 | 4.93 | 1.24 |
| Know when you are becoming angry | 355 | 4.92 | 1.37 |
| Show empathy | 355 | 4.84 | 1.35 |
| Identify when you experience mood shifts | 355 | 4.81 | 1.27 |
| Gear-up at will | 355 | 4.76 | 1.27 |
| Use internal talk to affect emotional states | 354 | 4.74 | 1.26 |
| Develop consensus with others | 355 | 4.73 | 1.29 |
| Follow words with actions | 354 | 4.72 | 1.24 |
| Know the impact of your behavior has on others | 355 | 4.72 | 1.24 |
| Work out conflicts | 354 | 4.71 | 1.23 |
| Calm quickly when angry | 354 | 4.62 | 1.33 |
| Relax when under pressure | 354 | 4.62 | 1.29 |
| Know when you become defensive | 355 | 4.61 | 1.24 |
| Recognize when others are distressed | 355 | 4.57 | 1.30 |
| Engaged in intimate conversations | 355 | 4.56 | 1.43 |
| Accurately reflects peoples feelings back to them | 354 | 4.49 | 1.26 |
| Regroup quickly after a setback | 353 | 4.46 | 1.37 |
| Know when you are thinking negatively | 354 | 4.45 | 1.35 |
| Help others manage their emotions | 354 | 4.40 | 1.37 |
| Stop or change an ineffective habit | 355 | 4.40 | 1.36 |
| Stay calm when targeted by anger of others | 353 | 4.35 | 1.42 |
| Associate physical cues with emotions | 354 | 4.33 | 1.33 |
| Produce high energy when doing uninteresting work | 354 | 4.20 | 1.28 |
| Mean | | 4.64 | |

The observations above are inferred from the extreme readings of the mean scores across Weisinger EQ Inventory. A more realistic description of the tendency for Malaysian EQ based on the mean raw scores of the Weisinger EQ Inventory is by examining the three highest and the three lowest mean scores. From these scores, the following may be surmised about Malaysian EQ competencies. The average Malaysian is likely most able to:

- (a) provide advice and support to others
- (b) makes others feel good
- (c) know what senses you are currently using

At the other pole it can be expected that the average Malaysian has low ability in:

- (a) staying calm when targeted of others
- (b) associating physical cues with emotions
- (c) producing high energy when doing uninterested work

Interpreted Scores of the Weisinger EQ Inventory

Recall that generally the EQ model measures human emotional competencies along the five dimensions or factors of:

- (a) self awareness
- (b) self management
- (c) self motivation
- (d) empathy
- (e) social skills

In the operationalization of the EQ model through the use of Weisinger EQ Inventory, Daft(1999) proposed that the questions (variables) in the Weisinger EQ Inventory are grouped in the manner shown in Table 7 to form the respective emotional competency dimension. Each dimension has five questions, which, although are worded differently, seek to elicit the similar answer. For each deimension, the total possible score can range from a low of five, to the maximum score of 35. A summary of the mean score across each dimension for the sample under analysis is shown in Table 8.

Table 7:Dimension And Questions Forming The Modified Weisinger EQ Inventory

| Dimension and Questions | N | Mean | Std Deviation |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----|------|---------------|
| Dimension 1: Self awareness | | | |
| Associate physical cues with emotions | 354 | 4.33 | 1.33 |
| Calm quickly when angry | 354 | 4.62 | 1.33 |
| Know what senses you are currently using | 355 | 4.93 | 1.24 |
| Identify when you experience mood shifts | 355 | 4.81 | 1.27 |
| Know when you become defensive | 355 | 4.61 | 1.24 |
| Dimension 2: Self management | | | |
| Relax when under pressure | 354 | 4.62 | 1.29 |
| Know when you are becoming angry | 355 | 4.92 | 1.37 |
| Use internal talk to affect emotional states | 354 | 4.74 | 1.26 |
| Stay calm when targeted by anger of others | 353 | 4.35 | 1.42 |
| Know when you are thinking negatively | 354 | 4.45 | 1.35 |
| Dimension 3: Self motivation | | | |
| Gear- up at will | 355 | 4.76 | 1.27 |
| Regroup quickly after a setback | 353 | 4.46 | 1.37 |
| Produce high energy when doing uninteresting work | 354 | 4.20 | 1.28 |
| Stop or change an ineffective habit | 355 | 4.40 | 1.36 |
| Follow words with actions | 354 | 4.72 | 1.24 |
| Dimension 4: Empathy | | | |
| Know the impact of your behavior has on others | 355 | 4.72 | 1.24 |
| Recognize when others are distressed | 355 | 4.57 | 1.30 |
| Help others manage their emotions | 354 | 4.40 | 1.37 |
| Show empathy | 355 | 4.84 | 1.35 |
| Engage in intimate conversations | 355 | 4.56 | 1.43 |
| Dimension 5: Social Skills | | | |
| Work out conflicts | 354 | 4.71 | 1.23 |
| Develop consensus with others | 355 | 4.73 | 1.29 |
| Make others feel good | 355 | 4.98 | 1.30 |
| Provide advice and support to others | 354 | 5.04 | 1.39 |
| Accurately reflects peoples feelings back to them | 354 | 4.49 | 1.26 |

From Table 8, it can be inferred that Malaysians as captured by the sample tend to be better able at “social skills” and “self awareness”, but are less able at “self management” and “self motivation”. The result that Malaysians tend to score higher of the “social skills” dimension tend to confirm lay observation about the average Malaysian, the Malays in particular, that they are harmony/peace loving people, are eager to please others. Similarly the result also tends to confirm lay observation that the average Malaysian, again the Malays . in particular, is less able to “self motivate”.

Table 8: Mean Score Across The Emotional Competency Dimension

| Dimension | N | Mean | Std Deviation |
|------------------------------|-----|---------|---------------|
| Dimension 5: Social Skills | 353 | 23.9462 | 4.8471 |
| Dimension 1: Self awareness | 354 | 23.3023 | 4.3222 |
| Dimension 4: Empathy | 354 | 23.0904 | 4.8790 |
| Dimension 2: Self management | 353 | 23.0737 | 4.4823 |
| Dimension 3: Self motivation | 351 | 22.5527 | 4.5803 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 348 | | |

Unlike with the Kouzes-Posner LPI where there are known population norms against which a particular score is measured against, neither Weisinger in the original form nor Daft for the modified form of the Weisinger EQ Inventory provides population norms. In the interpretation of the scores Daft is more elaborate than Weisinger in that a score is divided into three categories of “high”, “average”, and “low” according to the percentiles of possible theoretical scores. Scores of the “90th percentile and above are deemed “high”; scores between 50th and 89th percentile are deemed as “average”; while scores falling below the 50th percentile are deemed as “low”. Using this categorization criteria, a distribution of scores as depicted in Table 9 is obtained.

Table 9: Distribution of Score Across The Emotional Competency Dimensions

| Dimension | High (%) | Average (%) | Low (%) |
|------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------|
| Dimension 1: Self awareness | 12.7 | 44.8 | 42.5 |
| Dimension 2: Self management | 16.4 | 36.8 | 46.7 |
| Dimension 3: Self motivation | 14.3 | 44.0 | 41.7 |
| Dimension 4: Empathy | 12.5 | 43.1 | 44.5 |
| Dimension 5: Social Skills | 12.5 | 44.6 | 42.9 |

Based on Table 9 it may be said that on average only 13.7% of the population will score a “high” rating across any of the emotional competency dimensions. Respondents with consistently “high” across all the EQ dimensions form 8.8% of the sample.

MANOVA Using “Age Group” as the Independent Variable

The result of MANOVA suggests that on the overall “age group” is marginally significant determinant (Pillai’s Trace – 0.51, F=1.295, p=0.104; Wilks’ Lambda =0.856, F=1.299, p =0.101). The result is summarized in Table 10. Across the dimensions, age group can significantly account for only two, namely (a) “Dimension 2: Self management” and (b) “Dimension 3: Self motivation”. The summary of a post-hoc analysis of the difference across the age grouping is shown in Table 11.

The post hoc analysis reveals that across “Dimension 2: Self management” the age group “46-50 years old scores significantly higher than those in the “36-40” years old age group and marginally higher than the “16-20” age group. No age group is found to be statistically

significant in explaining the differences in “Dimension 3: Self motivation”. Notwithstanding, Table 11 shows the two age groups where significant differences are likely to occur.

Table 12 demonstrates the detailed scores for each dimension of emotional competency across the age groups. A cursory examination of Table 12 yields an interesting observation. In “Dimension 3: Motivation” it is evident that those in the “36-40” and “51-55” age groups tend to score lower than overall average, with scores of 21.0 and 21.75, respectively. Intuitive explanations may ne offered for these observations in that (a) as it is universally believed, mid-life crisis tends to first strike at about the time a person enters the “36-40” age group, making them susceptible to experience among other things, the feelings of de-motivation, and (b) people in Malaysia starts to think about retirement, hence the diminished feeling of motivation to work, by the time they hit the “51-55” age group. This is especially true of those in the civil service, where it is common for people to opt for early retirement by the time they reach 50 years old, especially the female civil servants.

Table 10: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

| Source | Dependent Variable | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--------|------------------------------|-------------|-------|-------|
| AGEGRP | Dimension 1: Self awareness | 26.714 | 1.424 | 0.185 |
| | Dimension 2: Self management | 40.279 | 2.018 | 0.044 |
| | Dimension 3: Self motivation | 47.061 | 2.299 | 0.021 |
| | Dimension 4: Empathy | 37.330 | 1.566 | 0.134 |
| | Dimension 5: Social Skills | 36.079 | 1.530 | 0.146 |

Table 11: Multiple Comparisons (Bonferroni test): Across Age Group

| Dependent Variable | (I) Age Group | (J) Age Group | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std Error | Sig. |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------|------|
| Dimension 2: Self management | 16-20 Yr Old | 46-50 Yr old | -3.6338 | 1.2400 | .130 |
| | 36-40 Yr old | 46-50 Yr old | -3.3266 | 1.0535 | .062 |
| | 16-20 Yr old | 26-30 Yr old | -3.0333 | 1.1681 | .354 |
| | 36-40 Yr old | 26-30 Yr Old | -2.6333 | .9622 | .235 |

Table 12: Descriptive Statistics Across the Dimensions By Age Group

| | | N | Mean | Std Deviation |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----|---------|---------------|
| Dimension 1: Self awareness | 16-20 yr old | 21 | 21.7619 | 4.3232 |
| | 21-25 yr old | 89 | 23.5730 | 4.1694 |
| | 26-30 yr old | 60 | 23.9167 | 4.1428 |
| | 31-35 yr old | 37 | 22.9730 | 3.7005 |
| | 36-40 yr old | 35 | 22.1714 | 4.1902 |
| | 41-45 yr old | 35 | 23.2000 | 5.1723 |
| | 46-50 yr old | 37 | 24.1622 | 4.2591 |
| | 51-55 yr old | 24 | 22.3333 | 4.5173 |
| | 56-60 yr old | 8 | 25.3750 | 5.6045 |
| | Total | 346 | 23.2977 | 4.3307 |
| Dimension 2: Self management | 16-20 yr old | 21 | 21.4762 | 4.6111 |
| | 21-25 yr old | 89 | 23.1461 | 4.2065 |
| | 26-30 yr old | 60 | 23.3667 | 4.4301 |
| | 31-35 yr old | 37 | 23.3243 | 3.7272 |
| | 36-40 yr old | 35 | 21.4571 | 4.6231 |
| | 41-45 yr old | 35 | 22.9143 | 5.0780 |
| | 46-50 yr old | 37 | 24.7838 | 4.3915 |
| | 51-55 yr old | 23 | 22.4348 | 4.4192 |
| | 56-60 yr old | 8 | 24.6250 | 6.7810 |
| | Total | 345 | 23.0696 | 4.5046 |
| Dimension 3: Self motivation | 16-20 yr old | 21 | 21.0000 | 3.8987 |
| | 21-25 yr old | 87 | 21.7356 | 4.6367 |
| | 26-30 yr old | 60 | 23.6333 | 4.1168 |
| | 31-35 yr old | 37 | 23.1892 | 4.7775 |
| | 36-40 yr old | 35 | 21.0000 | 4.0873 |
| | 41-45 yr old | 35 | 23.4571 | 5.3870 |
| | 46-50 yr old | 37 | 23.4054 | 4.1863 |
| | 51-55 yr old | 24 | 21.7500 | 5.1097 |
| | 56-60 yr old | 7 | 23.8571 | 4.9809 |
| | Total | 343 | 22.5044 | 4.6105 |
| Dimension 4: Empathy | 16-20 yr old | 20 | 22.2500 | 5.5048 |
| | 21-25 yr old | 89 | 23.5506 | 4.0955 |
| | 26-30 yr old | 60 | 23.6833 | 4.7781 |
| | 31-35 yr old | 37 | 23.5946 | 4.7578 |
| | 36-40 yr old | 35 | 21.4571 | 4.7979 |
| | 41-45 yr old | 35 | 22.2571 | 5.7027 |
| | 46-50 yr old | 37 | 24.0270 | 4.8275 |
| | 51-55 yr old | 24 | 21.5000 | 5.7935 |
| | 56-60 yr old | 8 | 25.5000 | 5.6569 |
| | Total | 345 | 23.1130 | 4.9015 |
| Dimension 5: Social skills | 16-20 yr old | 20 | 22.5500 | 5.4432 |
| | 21-25 yr old | 89 | 23.7865 | 4.3627 |
| | 26-30 yr old | 60 | 24.6000 | 4.7877 |
| | 31-35 yr old | 37 | 24.9730 | 4.8505 |
| | 36-40 yr old | 35 | 22.1143 | 5.2287 |
| | 41-45 yr old | 35 | 24.4571 | 5.3045 |
| | 46-50 yr old | 37 | 24.8378 | 4.8449 |
| | 51-55 yr old | 24 | 22.7083 | 4.7133 |
| | 56-60 yr old | 7 | 24.5714 | 5.5032 |
| | Total | 344 | 23.9360 | 4.8783 |

Conclusion

Using the modified form of the Weisinger EQ Inventory, it is fair to conclude from the sample that the average Malaysian, on balance has fairly high ability in the areas of (a) providing advice and support to others, (b) making others feel good, and (c) knowing what senses he/she is currently using. At the other extreme it may also be inferred that the average Malaysian has low ability in (a) staying calm when targeted by anger of others, (b) associating physical cues with emotions, and (c) producing high energy when doing uninteresting work. Given that Malays form 75% of the respondents, the finding in a sense confirms the typical stereotype of a Malay – eager to please others (especially foreigners) but more often than not, is less than industrious.

In the EQ dimensions, the sample reflects that the average Malaysians tend to be better able at “social skills” and “self awareness”, but are less able at “self management” and “self motivation”. Once again, given that the sample is predominantly Malays, the results tend to confirm the commonly held beliefs about the Malays that they are harmony/peace loving people, eager to please others, blemished only by the fact that they are less able to “self motivate”. In categorizing the scores across the dimensions, it is found that on average only about 13.7% of the population tend to score a “high rating” across any of the emotional competency dimensions. Malaysians who score consistently “high” across all the EQ dimensions form 8.8% of the population.

The result of MANOVA suggests that on the overall, “age group” is marginally significant in determining EQ. Where differences are statistically significant, it is found that “age group” affects (a) Dimension 2 : Self management” and (b) Dimension 3 : Self motivation”. Notwithstanding the low statistical significance, these findings confirm conventional wisdom about emotional competencies, in that they are age related, where one gets better with age and experience. In this context, it is found that people in the “46-50” age group are likely to be emotionally better skilled than others. As an anecdote, it may be said that there is perhaps some truth in the age-old Malay saying – the older coconut has creamier milk.

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