

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SKILLS (SES) AMONG LECTURERS IN RELATION TO
STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE

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PERPUSTAKAAN TUNKU TUN AMINAH

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In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Compassionate.

I praise and thank Allah.

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This thesis is dedicated to all of you.



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ABSTRACT

Social emotional skills (SES) of a lecturer are considered to play a vital role towards student performance. Despite of the fact, when it comes to Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), very little research is found on the importance and implementation of these skills. This research therefore determined the level of TVET lecturers' SES based on lecturers' and students' perspective, their relationship with student performance and difference in the level of SES between lecturers in education faculty and in engineering faculty. A case study method with quantitative approach was employed at Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM). A total of 99 lecturers and 373 of final year bachelor degree students from an education and an engineering faculties were involved in this study. They were selected using purposive sampling and total population sampling techniques. Data were collected using two sets of questionnaire, Empathy Quotient (EQ) to measure empathy and Teacher Interpersonal Self-efficacy Scale to measure self-efficacy. Findings showed that lecturers have high level of SES from lecturers' and students' perspective. Furthermore, the results of Mann Whitney U Test indicated statistically significant difference the perspective of lecturers and students. However, there was no significant correlation between lecturers' SES with students' performance. Nonetheless, lecturers' self-efficacy for classroom management had statistically significant relationship with students' performance. Meanwhile, there was also significant difference found in the level of lecturers' social emotional skills between both faculties. It is concluded that external related reliable feedback is important for lecturers to get to know about their level of SES. SES have a vital role towards students' performance and that lecturers with professional education background are more effective than lecturers with engineering background. It is hoped that this study could enhance the awareness of TVET institutions in SES as such could help the development of better skill workers in future.



ABSTRAK

Kemahiran sosial emosi pensyarah memainkan peranan penting terhadap prestasi pelajar. Walaubagaimanapun, amat kurang penyelidikan berkaitan kepentingan dan pelaksanaan kemahiran ini dalam Pendidikan dan Latihan Teknikal Vokasional (TVET). Oleh itu, penyelidikan ini dilakukan bagi menentukan tahap kemahiran sosial emosi pensyarah TVET dari perspektif pensyarah dan pelajar, hubungan kemahiran tersebut dengan prestasi pelajar, dan perbezaan tahap kemahiran sosial emosi antara pensyarah dari fakulti pendidikan dan fakulti kejuruteraan. Kaedah kajian kes dengan pendekatan kuantitatif telah dilaksanakan di Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM). Seramai 99 orang pensyarah dan 373 orang pelajar tahun akhir ijazah sarjana muda dari fakulti pendidikan dan kejuruteraan terlibat dalam kajian ini. Sampel dipilih menggunakan kaedah persampelan bertujuan dan keseluruhan populasi. Data diperolehi menggunakan dua set soal selidik; *Empathy Quotient (EQ)* dan *Teacher Interpersonal Self-efficacy Scale* untuk mengukur empati dan efikasi sendiri. Dapatan dari Mann Whitney U Test mengesahkan secara statistik bahawa terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan antara perspektif pensyarah dan pelajar terhadap tahap kemahiran sosial emosi pensyarah. Walaubagaimanapun, tiada korelasi yang signifikan antara kemahiran sosial pensyarah dan pencapaian pelajar. Namun, efikasi sendiri guru didapati mempengaruhi pencapaian pelajar. Disamping itu, terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan terhadap tahap sosial emosi antara pensyarah fakulti pendidikan dan fakulti kejuruteraan bahawa pensyarah pendidikan lebih efektif daripada pensyarah kejuruteraan dalam kemahiran sosial emosi. Kesimpulannya, walaupun tidak semua skala kemahiran sosial emosi berkaitan dengan pencapaian pelajar namun kemahiran ini penting terhadap prestasi pelajar. Oleh itu, diharapkan kajian ini dapat menjadi panduan kepada institusi TVET dalam meningkatkan kemahiran sosial emosi pensyarah dengan pelajar pada masa akan datang.



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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

TVET	Technical vocational education and training
UTHM	Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia
FPTV	Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education
FTK	Faculty of Engineering Technology
GPA	Grade Point Average
SES	Social emotional skills
EQ	Empathy Quotient
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
ITI	Industrial Training Institutes
MTU	Malaysian Technical University
NYDC	National Youth Development Corps
CIAST	Center for Instructor and Advanced Skill Training
MTUN	Malaysian Technical University Network
UTeM	Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka
UMP	Universiti Malaysia Pahang
UniMAP	Universiti Malaysia Perlis
PLSP	Pusat Latihan Staf Politeknik
ITTHO	Institut Teknologi Tun Hussein Onn
KUiTTHO	Kolej Universiti Teknologi Tun Hussein Onn
FKAAS	Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering
FSKTM	Computer Science and Information Technology
FKEE	Faculty of Electrical and Electronic Engineering
FPTP	Faculty of Technology Management and business
FAST	Faculty of Science, Technology and Human Development
FKMP	Faculty of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
CARE	Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education



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TSES	Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale
NELS	National Longitudinal Study
IRI	Interpersonal Reactivity Index
EM	Hogan Empathy scale (EM)
PPA	Pejabat Pengurusan Akademik
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SD	Standard Deviation
M	Mean
Z	z-value
r	Effect Size
CE	Cognitive Empathy
AE	Affective Empathy
SECM	Self-efficacy in Classroom management



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Technical vocational education and training (TVET) is the implementation of technical and vocational elements by providing the study of technologies, opportunities for practicing skills and preparing individuals for a profession (Nordina, Hassan, & Hasan, 2015). With the study of technologies, it also provides the general education and the study of related sciences in order to give a holistic approach to the students. Thus, TVET prepares students for vocational skills with broad range of knowledge, clear understanding and attitudes that are considered as indispensable for a significant performance in their career life ahead.

Mouzakitis (2010) argues that TVET has direct influence on the economic growth of a country and is responsible for producing human capital. It consists of a workforce that is technology oriented and is the originator, implementer, organizer and facilitator of technologically development of a country. This is the education that enables the individuals of a country to ultimately be independent and sustainable.

Despite of its importance and contribution in the development of a country, this educational field is mostly overlooked and often given least attention in Malaysia. As Cheong and Lee (2016) stated that whenever debates and discussions are carried out on improving the education system of Malaysia, TVET has hardly given a mention. As a result of this overlooking, Malaysia is facing unskilled workers with low labour productivity (Narayanan & Lai, 2014), youth with unemployment and students with low competency level (Cheong & Lee, 2016; Hapsah, 2013). Due to which pressure is



increasing day by day on all the educational institutes of Malaysia to create and nurture a workforce that has all the capabilities and competencies needed in making the country prosperous. This is the time to focus on technical and vocational education field that can play a significant role in enhancing economic growth and produce human capital for the country than any other educational field. Thus, endowment of quality TVET is an important step, and effective lecturers then become the domineering tool in this regard. Because, lecturers are the main source in any educational institutions for student learning and better student performance, hence, investment in the effectiveness of lecturers is crucial (Ingvarson & Rowe, 2008).

To motivate students to learn and perform better does not need a lecturer to have technical skills or hard skills alone. Yet, the lecturer must be aware of students' emotions and needs, create strong relationship with students, manage the classroom effectively, be confident about his/her capabilities, can create a healthy classroom climate. In short, SES of a lecturer are vital for students' academic and social performance (Hen & Goroshit, 2016). Thus, to be an effective lecturer, social and emotional skills are critical to develop and enhance student outcomes.

This chapter will first create the background of the study, then will identify the problem and form the objectives, hypothesis, scope of the study, significance, limitations, conceptual framework and finally operational definitions of the terms used in this study.

1.2 Background of the Problem

Lecturers are the individuals who are considered to have all the qualities, abilities and capabilities that are important to be a changing agent. Society demands and has made lecturers responsible for shaping next generations. To fulfil these demands and responsibilities, more focus is given on lecturers' preparedness to master in a certain field so that they can have an in-depth knowledge of their subject as by having mastery in a certain subject one can teach effectively. Although, to have an in depth knowledge of the subject is very important and crucial but there are some other facts too that are of importance in teaching effectively (Sharjudeen, Hamzah, & Udin, 2010).

The issue is that TVET is mostly considered an educational field whose main focus is to teach technical skills. Though, teaching technical skills is the keyword in the meaning of TVET, it should not be ignored that TVET comprises of human beings as its input that is students and they also need supportive relationship, helping and encouraging attitude, understanding and effective classroom management and a healthy classroom climate from their lecturers, in order to be fully skilled workers (Sharjudeen *et al.*, 2010). As Nasir *et al.* (2011) state that quality of skilled workers is not only evaluated by mastery in technical skills yet also mastery in non-technical skills. Such as communication skills, caring, interpersonal skills, problem solving attitude and teamwork. To face and deal with today's global industry which is advanced, powerful and moving forward, depending on just technical skills is not enough. The industries and institutions desire an employ that should not only have technical and vocational skills, yet an employ with communication skills, interpersonal skills, teamwork and an all-rounder who has the ability to perform any given task (Tennant, McMullen, & Kaczynski, 2009). This is the criteria which is now followed in all over the world including Malaysia.

However, Malaysia is going through skill mismatch phenomena these days. Where, the employers are efficient in technical skills yet they lack non-technical skills (Nasir *et al.*, 2011). This problem can be observed when employers have given negative responses to the performance of skilled workers in Malaysia. More dependence on technical skills and lack of mastery on non-technical skills as their working style is viewed as a phenomenon that is difficult to change (Nasir *et al.*, 2011).

Hence, skilled workers are recognized as quality workers when they have a unity between technical and non-technical skills. To create these skilled workers, it becomes crucial for TVET lecturers to possess non-technical skills with technical skills. So that they can promote these skills into their students. As Social learning theory suggests that the observable behaviors of lecturers impact students' behavior and their performance. Hence, students pick up their lecturers non-technical skills through observational learning and vicarious reinforcement which help them to produce positive behavior towards their surroundings. This positive behavior enhances their academic achievement as well as their career life (Neves, 2016).



Researchers claim that non-technical skills such as problem solving attitude, teamwork, interpersonal skills, caring and communication skills can be enhanced when an individual has empathy and self-efficacy (Jennings, 2011b). Empathy is the ability of a person which empowers him/her to accept others for who they are, to sense and take in situations from others' perspective and to take a productive and long-term attitude towards the improvement of their situation by searching for way out to meet their needs (Cooper, 2004). Whereas, self-efficacy is a person's own judgment regarding his/her ability to initiate and complete courses of action that leads towards the achievement of a particular goal (Bandura, 1995). These both terms come under one term known as SES (Hen & Goroshit, 2016).

Lecturers with SES tend to deliver and share the knowledge by keeping their students' perspective in their minds. These lecturers clearly know how to respond to the emotional states of their students (Hen & Goroshit, 2016) for example, instead of behaving rudely with the student who is not performing well in the class, lecturer with SES will find the cause of the poor performance which might be some problems at home. Then keeping in mind the emotional state of the student, the lecturer may respond him/her with kindness. Such kind of behavior of the lecturer promotes caring and compassionate relationship between lecturer and student.

Lecturers with this skill also create a psychologically safe classroom environment for students nurtured by strong classroom management skills (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). These are the classrooms where lecturers and students respect one another, communication between lecturer and student is humble, polite and problem-solving, all the activities and lectures are designed to promote student learning, achievement and students' passion for learning.

Moreover, one of the primary objectives of educational institutions is to develop students' capacities to become quality graduates in their chosen profession. Which begins with empowering students to perform adequately in their various educational pursuits. Research has shown that there is an association between lecturer's SES and students' performance (Hen & Goroshit, 2016; Hen, Walter, & Sharabi, 2014; Jennings, 2011a). Jennings and Greenberg (2009) proposed a theoretical model named as prosocial classroom model. Which postulates that lecturers' SES encourage prosocial classroom environment and students' performance.

The model claims that lecturers having SES are efficient in creating a healthy classroom climate based on strong lecturer-student relationship and effective classroom management. This healthy classroom climate then enhances students' performance.

Furthermore, Mojavezi and Tamiz (2012) studied on the relationship between the self-efficacy of lecturers and students' performance. The study revealed positive relationship between self-efficacy of lecturers and students' performance. Furthermore, Long, Ibrahim, and Kowang (2013) found the ability of a lecturer to be understanding and developing positive interaction with students as the most effective competencies in enhancing students' satisfaction and academic performance. Hence, based on the review of previous studies, it is concluded that lecturers' SES enhance students' performance.

Furthermore, studies also claim that lecturers with teacher training or in education faculty are more effective and successful in classroom practices and in better student outcomes than the lecturers in other faculties (Coffey, 2010). These lecturers have more understanding towards their students and are more confident towards their profession. Darling-Hammond (2000) reviewed 30 years of research and concluded that fully prepared lecturers are more successful with their students than the lecturers with no such preparation for teaching. This fact is applied to all kinds of fields whether it is mathematics, science or vocational education. Thus, lecturers with high knowledge of teaching and learning have the benefit of being highly effective than lecturers who lack this knowledge.

Conversely, when lecturers lack SES, it not only affects students' interest towards learning and their performance, however it also affects lecturers' well-being, motivation, creativity, determination, enthusiasm and their interest towards their profession (Garvis & Pendergast, 2011; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Thus, SES are very crucial to be developed and enhanced in lecturers for effective teaching and to fulfil the big responsibility that is to shape the next generation in terms fully skilled workers and better human beings.

To determine SES of TVET lecturers and its relationship with students' performance, this study was conducted on the lecturers and students of one of the renowned TVET university of Malaysia namely, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn



Malaysia (UTHM). Informal interviews had been conducted with UTHM students in which they were asked about their lecturers' understanding ability, their ability to manage classroom, relationship with students and their flexibility. Most of the students reported that not all the lecturers are able to understand, flexible, manage classroom and relationship with students effectively. As one of the students stated that;

"Some of the lecturers don't want to know or understand what we are going through. They don't want to listen our problems and confusions regarding assignments" (Student 1)

According to this student, some of the lecturers are not understanding towards students, they lack the ability of taking students' perspectives and responding to their feelings and needs.

Furthermore, students reported that at times lecturers don't appreciate students' viewpoint and just impose what they want them to do, which shows lack of empathy in them as it can be observed from one of the students' feedback stated below;

"When they not agree with our opinion, most of them strictly give their opinion... which is not agreement with the student. So that will burden the student" (student 2).

These results in students' demotivation and frustration towards that specific course, the lecturer and affects their study. Some of them also mentioned about the expectations of the lecturers from students. In their point of view, sometimes lecturers are unable to clear their expectation from their students and due to this misunderstanding, students feel unable to reach those unclear expectations. Which shows lecturers' lack of self-efficacy in classroom management. One of the students stated as;

"We can learn to be better but if they want us to be best then they should also deliver the best... they should clear their expectations from us and guide us according to their expectations so that we can improve...! You want more, you give more...!" (Student 3).

In addition, the researcher also consulted, the counselor of the institute regarding what problems students are facing nowadays when they come to seek counselling, what are the causes of their problems and approximately what ratio of students come for counselling.

The most common problem that the counsellor often encounters in students is stress. They feel too stressed regarding their studies mainly. According to the counsellor almost 30% percent of the students feel stressed about their studies and come for counselling. Their stress is mostly due to pressure from lecturers, conflict and lack of understanding with lecturers. When students don't find lecturers supportive, they feel stressed and less motivated from their studies.

Furthermore, the counsellor also reported other causes of students' stress such as family pressure and break ups with girl/boyfriend. But the most common was lack of understanding with lecturers.

This informal interview with students and the counsellor do give a thought that the problem may exist in the level of lecturers' SES. Although, the level of the SES is not clear yet, it can be low, moderate or high. Nevertheless, SES of a lecturer have crucial role towards students' performance, it becomes critical to determine the level of their SES and their relationship with student performance. This research is therefore an initial step towards the exploration and investigation of the problem. Because, it is good to take precautions about any problem before it gets worst.

1.3 Problem Statement

TVET is no doubt a contributor of human capital and economic development for nations. Whereas in Malaysia, it receives little attention despite of its important role and potential for nation building and national development. Since TVET focuses on developing and preparing individuals to become skilled professionals capable of carrying out different tasks within their occupational areas, it becomes imperative that adequate strategies are employed in improving students' performance. Increasing number of researches claim that Malaysia is facing skills mismatch in its workforce which means it has technical skills yet, not sufficient non-technical skills. Furthermore, in the preliminary analysis reported in the background of this study, it was established from the perspectives of students' that not all lecturers are understanding, effective classroom manager, develop lecturer student relationship towards them during the teaching and learning activities. Some students also opined that their lecturers were not self-efficacious in communicating the concepts discussed in class. On the other



hand, the counselor of the institute also reported that almost 30% of students have problems in their studies and are facing stress due to their lecturers' lack of understanding and conflicts with them. As Social learning theory suggests that the way lecturers behave with their students impact students' behavior and performance, it becomes crucial to determine the effectiveness of lecturers. Although, the preliminary analysis was not able to establish the extent to which these lecturers lacked SES in their relationship with students. The study however attempted to address this issue. By specifically determining the perspectives of lecturers and students regarding the SES of TVET lecturers and ascertained the relationship between lecturers' SES and student performance. Furthermore, the study also identified the difference in the level of SES of lecturers in education program and in technical program. It is very important to determine the level of lecturers' SES and their relationship with students' performance. Because only then one can come to determine whether the lecturers need to have some form of training that focuses on enhancing their SES. As high level of lecturer's SES are imperative for lecturer student relationship, effective classroom management, healthy classroom climate which ultimately enhance students' performance. Therefore, this study is paramount to be conducted.

1.4 Aim of the Study

This study aimed to find out the level of SES of TVET lecturers and their relationship with students' performance in the two faculties of Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) which are Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education and Faculty of Engineering Technology.

1.5 Objectives

Following objectives were formulated for the study:

1. To determine lecturers' perspective of their SES.
2. To identify students' perspective of their lecturers' SES.
3. To determine the difference of lecturers' SES from the perspectives of lecturers and students.

4. To ascertain the relationship between lecturers' SES and students' performance.
5. To identify the difference in the level of SES of lecturers between faculties.

1.6 Hypothesis

1. H₁: There is significant difference between the perspectives of lecturers and students regarding lecturers' level of SES.
2. H₁: There is significant relationship between lecturers' level of SES and students' performance.
3. H₁: There is significant difference in the level of SES of lecturers between faculties.

1.7 Scope of the Study

For this study, lecturers' SES were defined as empathy and self-efficacy in classroom management. Whereas, students' performance was measured by their GPA. The respondents for the study were TVET lecturers and final year degree students from Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM), in the Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education (FPTV) and Faculty of Engineering Technology (FTK).

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The generalizability of the research can be questionable due to the small sample size, as the sample was taken from only one TVET institute of Malaysia. Second, how social and emotional skills of lecturers were operationalized for this study can limit the findings of the study as SES is a subjective term. Third, the results on SES' questionnaire may have chances of social desirability effect as it was a self-report questionnaire.

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PTTA UTHM
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