

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI) AMONG SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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### ABSTRACT

*Emotional intelligence plays an important role in teaching profession; it has direct effect on the teacher's behaviour in school and it is important for the success of their career. This study sought to investigate the Emotional Intelligence (EI) of special education teachers in primary schools based on their demographic profile. The study aimed to see whether the respondents' demographic profile (marital status, level of education and teaching experience) influence the level of their EI. The respondents of the study consisted of 100 primary school special education teachers who were selected using purposive sampling. The research was quantitative and used the survey method through questionnaire. The results of this study were analyzed using Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0. The study adopted One-Way ANOVA to look deeper into the magnitude of the demographic profiles on EI. The findings showed that there were no significant differences in EI among the respondents based on marital status, level of education, and teaching experience. In conclusion, the respondents' demographic profiles do not influence the level of emotional intelligence. This directly indicates EI is governed by other factors probably on intrinsic motivation, personnel competence and social competence.*

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, special education teachers, marital status, level of education, teaching experience.

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### INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the integration of emotions with cognitive structures in an individual's personality that is a type of psychological element resulting from emotional appeals with one's cognition. EI also known as one's subconscious ability to create positive outcomes in one's relationships with others and with oneself, by being in control of how one responds to the world around (Sharma, 2017). Mayer and Salovey (1993) state that emotional intelligence covers the three main categories, namely (1) the ability to differentiate self-emotions with others'; (2) the ability to control self-emotion coordinate thoughts; and (3) the ability to use emotional information to guide thinking. Meanwhile, Goleman (1995) categorizes emotional intelligence into five main components namely (1) self-observation ability; (2) emotion-management ability; (3) self-encouragement ability; (4) excitement-control ability; and (5) master the technique of establishing interpersonal relationships. At the same time, Goleman also explains that one's success is contributed by 80% of EI and only 20% of IQ.

In education field, special education teachers do not only work with special education students who have multiple cognitive abilities but are indirectly dealing with other teachers and parents too. The ever-changing and dynamic education system requires teachers who are not only intellectually intelligent but also intelligent in other aspects (Bisht & Joshi, 2017; Hans, Mubeen, & Said Al Rabani, 2013). EI impacts many aspects of our daily lives such as how we behave and interact with others (Devi & Babu, 2015). The emotional well-being of a teacher is crucial because it influences what they do, who they meet, how they look and feel, and it decides their lives (Bala, 2017; Tabatabaei & Farazmehr, 2015).

In recent years, the skills associated with EI have been gaining more attention especially in the field of education. Previous research indicates that the scarcity of utilizing EI in the classroom may lead to serious diminishment in the significance not only of the knowledge of the subject but also learning and teaching techniques applied by the teachers (Barłozek, 2013). A study on

EI shows that it is the major predictor of academic, personal and career success (Randhawa & Nanda, 2017). EI plays an important role in the teaching profession because it has a direct impact on the behavior of teachers in school and is essential to their career success. The understanding of emotion at workplace is increasingly important as it serves as the basis for determining individual responses and workplace limited attitudes (Kassim, Bambale, & Jakada, 2016). In addition, Ashraf and Hosseinnia (2017) state that EI is also considered an important reason for improving achievement, good behavior and promoting achievement.

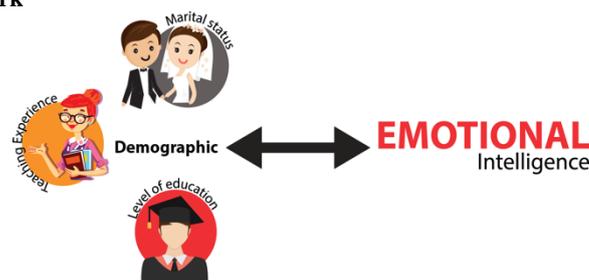
EI is also effective in bringing about positive EI changes and related behaviors that can have a positive impact on teacher practice, meaningful feelings and their relationship with students (Dolev & Leshem, 2017). It is very important that only those with high EI are in the teaching profession (Trivedi & Shakya, 2014). This is because a teacher who has good emotional intelligence is important because the pupils always follow their teacher. The emotionally-intelligent teacher is also said to be able to control the emotions of the students more effectively. In addition, Campos, Martins, Martins, Chaves, & Duarte (2016); Jerslina & Devaki (2016) found that teachers understand and know how to manage their own emotions well and can handle the feelings of others effectively. This is to enable teachers to avoid negative emotions that may disturb the process of teaching and learning in the classroom (Konradus & Harsanti, 2015).

Tahir and Boon (2011) note that intellectual aspects are seen to increase the level of professionalism of teachers through continuous efforts to enhance knowledge, creative, critical and intellectual thinking and foresight. Meanwhile, emotional aspects are evaluated through EI comprising components of personnel competence and social competence. Personnel competence consists of the elements of self-awareness and self-management while social competence consists of elements of social awareness and social competence. EI covers self-control, enthusiasm, diligence, self motivation, survival against failures and hurdles and the capability of controlling heart desires and emotions. EI involves two basic skills, namely self-knowing skills and knowing other people's skills (Sauki & Husin, 2011). They are also of the opinion that this ability not only can produce individuals who are able to know their ability and strength but also to understand the feelings of others. Therefore, special education teachers need to have high EI to enable them to teach students more effectively Ghani and Mohd Zain (2014) due to the cognitive, social, emotional, physical and spiritual differences of special education students (Eng, 2014).

Generally, teachers with high EI are smart in assessing emotions, managing their own emotions, managing others' feelings and using emotion properly (Amirian & Behshad, 2016). In addition, it also shows that teachers who have high self-awareness are able to manage their own emotions and others, are empathy and have high social competence, social skills and emotional maturity (Singh & Kumar, 2016). Subsequently, high EI teachers are also reported to be less stressful on information that is not clear in the context of teaching and less stressful on information conflicts at workplace (Mériida-López, Extremera, & Rey, 2017). Teachers with high EI are also expected to teach in a more effective manner because they are aware of their own and their students' strengths and weaknesses, and are able to adapt to classroom conditions (Alam & Ahmad, 2018). With high EI level, teachers are able to control emotions, show more empathy attitudes, able to learn to adapt to the problems faced and give good emotional education to students (Supardi, Azman, Che Rus, & Che Kob, 2016). Last but certainly not the least, according to Ul-Hassan (2016) teacher with high EI retain less level of turnover intentions. Therefore, this study is conducted to see if there is a significant relationship between EI level of special education teachers and demographic profiles such as marital status, education level and teaching experience.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework



According to (Bose & Guha, 2018; B. Singh & Kumar, 2016) the teaching profession which is increasingly challenging with many work burdens has become a source of stress, discontent and burnout among teachers. Teaching is also an emotional practice which involves emotional relationships, emotional understanding and emotional labour (Myint & Aung, 2016). Naqvi, Iqbal, and Akhtar (2016) lack of awareness about the emotional state of self or others can give rise to problematic interpretation of the behaviour as well as adoption of inappropriate approaches to handle them. Besides, lack of these competences causes educational difficulties, which make teachers feel helpless, or making inappropriate actions (Anna, 2015). Consequently, teachers fail to understand the emotions of their students, unable to build a healthy relationship with students and colleagues. In fact, the high expectations given to the teachers as a person with the knowledge and skills in addressing various problems in school also contribute stress to them (Syafriren, Ishak, & Erlina, 2017).

Jennings et al., (2017) growing numbers of teachers are reporting high levels of occupational stress, and high levels of teacher turnover are having a negative impact on education quality. Yoke and Panatik (2016) explain that EI study found a major contributor to the emotional stress of Malaysian teachers is the heavy workload and pressured working environment.

Additionally, nowadays teaching is a job that gives much pressure in teaching students with various disorders (Punia, Balda, & Poonam, 2016). This situation requires teachers to constantly control their emotions at work and realize that teaching is a job that demands diverse emotions (Yin, Huang, & Wang, 2016). Especially for those who teach special education students where according to Johnson and Semmelroth (2014), teaching special education students is very challenging and requires skilled teachers.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

As for marital status, the study of Kuchy and Thilagavathy (2017) on 324 high school teachers in the Kulgam Jammu and Kashmir district of India found that married male teachers have higher EI than unmarried female teachers. Meanwhile, a study on 109 teachers who work in the central university of Aligarh district shows that there were significant differences between married and unmarried EI teachers, where married teachers have higher EI than single teachers (Sharma & Siddiqui, 2018). Meanwhile, the study on the influence of demographic factors on marital status on the level of emotional intelligence shows that there is a significant difference in teachers' emotional intelligence in relation to marital status (Singh, 2015). In contrast, the findings conducted by Bibi, Chaudhry, and Awan (2015) on 374 teachers from five KPK Universities show that there was no significant influence of marital status on teacher emotional intelligence in the KPK Universities. The result of this study is in line with the findings of the study of Adilogullari (2011) on 340 teachers serving in the central region of Gaziantep. His findings show that teachers' emotional intelligence based on the variable of marital status does not show any significant changes. In addition, his findings show that the level of emotional intelligence of the respondents varies with gender and marital status.

As for level of education, the study of Jorfi, Yaccob, and Shah, (2011); Ponmozhi and Ezhilbharathy (2017) found that the variable of teacher education level has a positive correlation to one's emotional intelligence. The findings of Shukla and Srivastava (2016) also show that EI and teacher education level have a significant positive relationship. However, the findings show that there is no difference in the level of emotional intelligence in terms of age, race and education level (Fletcher, 2007). The study of Birol, Atamtürk, Silman, and Şensoy (2009) on secondary school teachers also found that there was no significant difference between the level of education and the emotional intelligence score of the teacher.

As for teaching experience, the study conducted by Singh (2015), teacher's teaching experience do not cause any difference to the emotional intelligence of the respondents. The research covered 65 teachers in three major secondary girls' schools in Dhufar Governate by Alhashemi (2018) found out there is no statistically significant level difference ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the sample with regards to teaching experience. Moreover, study done by Mahmoodi and Ghaslani (2014) also found significant differences found among teachers' emotional intelligence regarding their teaching experience, which showed that experienced teachers had higher levels of emotional intelligence. The study in Malaysia by Yoke and Panatik (2016) also obtained the same results as teaching experience does not show any statistical differences with EI among teachers. The results of the study conducted by Patra (2011) on 42 teachers comprising 21 primary school teachers and 21 secondary school teachers indicated that teachers with higher teaching experience have higher levels of emotional intelligence. At the same time, more experienced teachers are also found to be more efficient than the less experienced teachers (Kauts & Chechi, 2014).

## METHODOLOGY

The design of this study is quantitative and uses survey method through questionnaire. Survey method was selected due to its advantages in collecting fast data and the respondents' responses can be collected directly in a short time. The sample consisted of 100 primary school special education teachers was selected using purposive sampling method involving 12 primary schools of the Integrated Special Education Program in Hilir Perak area. This study used a set of questionnaires adapted from the questionnaire developed by (Tahir & Boon, 2011). The questionnaire used was a modified questionnaire from the Emotional Competence Inventory by Goleman (1998). In addition, the questionnaire contains 55 items and is categorized into five main dimensions namely self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy and social skills. The data obtained were analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.00. Statistical inferential data analysis was used to formulate quantitative data collected. Inference data analysis of One Way ANOVA was used to identify whether there is a significant difference between emotional intelligence level of special education teachers and demographic profiles (marital status, education level and teaching experience).

## FINDINGS

The results of the study were analyzed using One-Way ANOVA to identify if there was a significant correlation between the level of emotional intelligence of primary school special education teachers in Hilir Perak area with demographic profiles such as marital status, education level and teaching experience.

### EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE LEVELS BASED ON MARITAL STATUS

Table 1 shows the analysis of differences in the mean score of emotional intelligence based on marital status. The result of the analysis showed that the mean score of the married respondents was the highest at 4.1279 compared with the other groups. It was accompanied by the unmarried respondents (single) of 4.0847. Next was among the widows with a status of 3.2200. Finally, the lowest mean score was recorded by the group of respondents with a status of widower of 3.2200.

**Table 1: Difference of the Mean score of emotional intelligence levels based on marital status**

Marital Status	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
SINGLE	17	4.0847	.42811
MARRIED	81	4.1279	.32315
WIDOW	1	3.8600	.
WIDOWER	1	3.2200	.
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4.1088</b>	<b>.35073</b>

Note: Level of Score: 1 - 2.33 = Low; 2.34 - 3.67 = Moderate; 3.68 - 5.00 = High

Table 2 showed the results of one-way ANOVA test analysis to see if there is a significant difference between the level of emotional intelligence and the marital status of primary school special education teachers in Hilir Perak area. The analysis showed that there was no significant difference between the level of emotional intelligence and the marital status  $F = (3, 96)$ ,  $p = .062$ . The findings showed that there is no significant difference between emotional intelligence and marital status.

**Table 2: One-Way ANOVA Test on emotional intelligence levels based on marital status**

	Total Square	df	Mean Square	Ratio F	p
Between Group	.891	3	.297	.2527	.062
Within Group	11.287	96	.118		
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.178</b>	<b>99</b>			

Note: Significant at  $p < .05$  level

### EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE LEVELS BASED ON EDUCATION LEVEL

Table 3 showed the difference in the mean score of the level of emotional intelligence based on the level of education of primary school special education teachers in Hilir Perak area. The results of the analysis showed that respondents who have Master's Degree were the group that contributed the highest mean score of 4.2767 compared to other groups. Meanwhile, respondents with Bachelor Degree qualifications were the second group that recorded the highest mean score of 4.1184. Meanwhile, the lowest mean score was recorded by a group of special education teachers with a Diploma qualification of 3.8800. The results of the study findings also found that there were no respondents with PhD academic qualifications.

**Table 3: The difference of the Mean score on emotional intelligence based on education level**

Level of Education	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
DIPLOMA	8	3.8800	.36395
BACHELOR DEGREE	86	4.1184	.34975
MASTER	6	4.2767	.22677
PhD	.	.	.
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4.1088</b>	<b>.35073</b>

Note: Level of Score: 1 - 2.33 = Low; 2.34 - 3.67 = Moderate; 3.68 - 5.00 = High

Table 4 showed the results of One-Way ANOVA test to see if there is a significant difference between emotional intelligence levels with the education level of primary school special education teachers in Hilir Perak area. The findings showed that there is no significant difference  $F (2, 97) = 2.495$ ,  $p = 0.88$ . Thus, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the level of emotional intelligence and the level of education.

**Table 4: One-Way ANOVA Test on emotional intelligence levels based on education level**

	Total Square	df	Mean Square	Total F	p
Between Group	.596	2	.298	2.495	.088
Within Group	11.582	97	.119		
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.178</b>	<b>99</b>			

Note: Significant at  $p < .05$  level

### EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE LEVELS BASED ON TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Table 5 showed the difference in the mean score of the level of emotional intelligence based on the teaching experience of primary school special education teachers in Hilir Perak area. The results of this analysis showed that the mean score of respondents who served between 2-5 years (4.2033) was the highest compared to other groups. This is followed by respondents with more than 10 years teaching experience (4.0974). On the other hand, the lowest mean score (4.0540) was recorded among respondents' groups with 5-10 years of teaching experience.

**Table 5: The difference of the Mean score on emotional intelligence based on teaching experience**

Teaching Experience	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
2 – 5 YEARS	30	4.2033	.42605
5 – 10 YEARS	47	4.0540	.24664
MORE THAN 10 YEARS	23	4.0974	.41029
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4.1088</b>	<b>.35073</b>

Note: Level of Score: 1 - 2.33 = Low; 2.34 - 3.67 = Moderate; 3.68 - 5.00 = High

Table 6 showed that there is no significant difference between the level of emotional intelligence and the teaching experience of primary school special education teachers in Hilir Perak area F (2, 97) = 1.698, p = .188. This showed that besides marital status and education level, the teaching experience factor also does not affect the level of emotional intelligence of special education teachers.

**Table 6: One-Way ANOVA Test of emotional intelligence based on teaching experience**

	Total Square	df	Mean Square	Ratio F	p
Between Group	.412	2	.206	1.698	.188
Within Group	11.766	97	.121		
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.178</b>	<b>99</b>			

Note: Significant at p < .05 level

Overall, the results of One-Way ANOVA test analysis showed that there was no significant difference between the level of emotional intelligence and the respondent's demographic profiles ie marital status (.062); education level (0.88) and teaching experience (.188).

## DISCUSSIONS, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

The findings showed that there is no significant difference between EI level and the demographic profiles of special education teachers in Hilir Perak area. Analysis of One-Way ANOVA test between EI level and respondents' marital status found no significant difference. The finding of this study was in parallel with the findings of the study by (Adilogullari, 2011; Bibi et al., 2015) that there was no significant influence on the marital status of EI teachers. However, it is slightly different from the findings obtained by Singh (2015) where there is a significant difference in EI teachers in relation to marital status. This situation may be due to the fact that married special education teachers have a lot of exposure to various emotions either at home or in a school environment as opposed to other groups of special education teachers.

The findings also showed that there is no significant difference between EI level of special education teachers in Hilir Perak area with education level. Birol et al., (2009) also supports the findings of this study in which their studies on secondary school teachers found that there was no significant difference between the level of teacher education and the EI score. However, the findings of (Jorfi et al., 2011; Shukla & Srivastava, 2016) appear to be quite different ie the variable of teacher education level has a positive correlation to EI of teachers.

In addition, the findings showed that there is no significant difference between the EI level and the teaching experience of special education teachers in Hilir Perak area. The finding of this study is in parallel with the findings of (Singh, 2015; Yoke & Panatik, 2016), whereby the teaching experience of teachers does not give any different influences to EI of teachers. Previous studies explain that teachers with more teaching experience have a high EI level Patra (2011) and are more efficient compared to less experienced teachers (Kauts & Chechi, 2014). Working experience is important and can help special education teachers to deal with various challenges when teaching special education students with various cognitive and behavioral abilities. In fact, working experience is important to ensure that special education teachers continue to be effective in carrying out entrusted tasks.

In conclusion, the findings showed that there is no significant difference between EI level of primary school special education teachers in Hilir Perak area with demographic profiles such as marital status, education level and teaching experience. This directly indicates EI is governed by other factors probably on intrinsic motivation, personnel competence and social competence. However, the researchers believe that EI and these three demographic profiles play an important role in producing more efficient and competitive special education teachers. Future study may use other methodologies such as case studies and action studies. In addition, the researchers also suggest that studies with other demographic profile such as socio-economic status of special education teachers. Moreover, future study also should investigate other factors that might affect special education teachers motivation or attitude which may contribute towards their EI.

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