

An Empirical Investigation on the Gender Differences in the Effects of Psychological Well-being and the Relationship With Emotional Intelligence: Case of Students Taking Sijil Pengajian Islam Malaysia in Sabah

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Keyword

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ABSTRACT

Psychological well-being is a state that results from feeling content with one's physical health, who one is as a person, and with one's close relationships. Meanwhile, emotional intelligence is a type of social intelligence that comprises the capacity to keep track of one's own and other people's emotions and feelings, to distinguish between them, and to utilise that information to inform decisions and actions. Undoubtedly, a variety of elements, including emotional intelligence, have an impact on a person's psychological well-being. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the gender differences in the effects of psychological well-being. Furthermore, this study also aims to examine the relationship between psychological well-being and emotional intelligence in IPDAS, Sabah. The results show no gender differences between men and women in the effects of psychological well-being. Moreover, it is found that there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being.

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INTRODUCTION

World Health Organization (WHO) (2022) stated the significance of mental health in accomplishing global development goals has gained more recognition in recent years, as seen by the Sustainable Development Goals' inclusion of mental health. In addition, one of the main factors that contribute to disability is depression. In fatalities among people aged 15 to 29, suicide ranks fourth. As much as two decades earlier than expected, people with serious mental illnesses pass away due to curable medical diseases.

Malaysia has a population of 32.7 million, including 17.0 million males and 15.7 million females (Jun, 2022). According to United Nations World Population Ageing 2019, the population's age distribution for those between 0 and 14 years old decreased to 23.2 per cent, while 69.5 per cent

was for those aged 15-64. A survey from the National Health and Morbidity Survey (2022) found among teenagers a growing concern about mental health problems.

According to the World Health Organization (2023), 1 in 8 teens have considered suicide, and 1 in 10 have tried to end their lives. Additionally, the poll revealed that 18.5 per cent of teenage girls and 7.6 per cent of teenage boys have considered suicide, respectively. For the percentage of teenagers who have tried to kill themselves, teenage girls are higher at 13.4 per cent compared to teenage boys at 5.7 per cent. As for depression, the survey found that 1 out of 4 teenagers suffer from depression, and the percentage of depression among teenage girls is higher at 36.1 per cent compared to 17.7 per cent among teenage boys. To have a strong and positive level of mental health among students, they need psychological well-being, which is the key to achieving optimal individual function, to undergo a better life, and to actively contribute to society (Malinauskas and Malinauskiene, 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological Well-being

Psychological Well-being refers to an individual's appraisal of the contentment and enjoyment with the quality of their current existence, with a higher feeling of well-being implying an individual experiencing more good emotions and less negative emotions (Shuo. et al., 2022). Moreover, for tertiary education students' psychological well-being reflects their assessment of their quality of life and influences their capacity for life adaptation. Furthermore, according to Mayordomo et al. (2016), there is a positive association between age and psychological well-being, which may be the outcome of good social environment adaptation. According to this study, the capacity to decide how to control one's behaviour might be called adaptability.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is necessary for an individual to adapt well; according to research by Drigas and Papoutsis (2018), a person can manage their feelings and emotions, distinguish between them and use the information in their thoughts and actions. These studies clearly state adjusting oneself to the environment is called intelligence. This change depends on age, society and culture. Everyday experiences create this ability by using reflective thinking to improve learning Guerra-Bustamante et al. (2019).

According to Seligman (2003), in recent years, there has been a tremendous increase in the study of mental health among young people because, in the past, psychology tended to emphasise dissatisfaction and neglected the positive aspects of human potential. Adolescence is a transition group that lends itself well to this study because it involves many life changes and is frequently described as stressful (Viejo et al., 2018; Arguedas et al., 2018). Adolescence is somewhat different because research shows that adolescents can be both a source of issues and an important tool for growth for our nation (Viejo et al., 2018).

Therefore, the previous study stated that the state of Sabah has the greatest frequency of anxiety and the second-highest rates of stress and depression compared to other states (Rathakrishnan et al., 2019). They added that respondents of Bumiputera Sabah ethnicity had the largest rates of anxiety, while those whose parents were divorced had the highest rates of stress, sadness, and anxiety.

Research Objective

The aim of this study is to examine the gender differences in the effects of psychological well-being. Furthermore, this study also aims to examine the relationship between psychological well-being and emotional intelligence in IPDAS, Sabah. This study also aims to identify the role of emotional intelligence in predicting the psychological well-being of students.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study has been done in Institut Pengajian Islam dan Dakwah (IPDAS) in Kudat, which is in Sabah, one of the states in Malaysia. In the beginning, attempts were made to get in touch with the

educational institutions so that the aims of the research could be discussed, and permission could be requested to carry out the questionnaires. A total of 389 undergraduates were employed from IPDAS in Keningau and Kudat. Purposive sampling was used for this study to have the intended composition of groups.

In order to gather information for this study, a quantitative method by survey was administered. The survey was administered through a questionnaire with three sections. Section A consists of questions with instruments adopted from Schutte's Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SREIT), which contains 33 items and measures of 6 dimensions, which are positive affect, emotions of others, happy emotions, own emotions, non-verbal emotions, and emotional management which measured on a five-point scale ranging from 1-strongly disagrees to 5-strongly agree. An individual's general Emotional Intelligence score can be determined by first grading each of these criteria and then finding the sum of those grades to get the overall score for that individual (Aniemeka, Akinnawo & Akpunne, 2020).

In Section B, Ryff's Psychological well-being scale was used as an instrument in this study. There are several versions of this scale, including 84 items, 42 items and 18 items version. This study will use a 42-item version; it measures six identified components of well-being: (1) self-acceptance, (2) environmental mastery, (3) personal growth, (4) positive relations with others, (5) purpose in life and (6), autonomy each component consists of 7 items. Respondents are asked to rate their level of agreement based on a 6-point agreement ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Table I below shows the items' division based on the positive and negative components.

Table I. Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-being

Scale	Components	Positive Item	Negative Item
Ryff's scales of psychological well-being	Self- Acceptance	12,18,24,30,42	6,36
	Environmental Mastery	8,14,26,32,	2,20,38
	Personal Growth	9,15,33,39	3,21,27
	Positive Relations	10,16,28,34	4,22,40
	Purpose in Life	5,23,41	11,17,29,35
	Autonomy	19,25,31	1,7,13,37

Section C consists of questions related to respondents' demographic profiles where participants provided their data on gender, age, and area of institute.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the differences in psychological well-being scores between males and females. The research utilised descriptive, independent T-test and multiple linear regression analysis. Calculating the mean, standard deviation, and frequencies is part of the descriptive analysis process. The data from this study were analysed through IBM SPSS Version 26 and PLS-SEM Analysis.

PLS-SEM is a second-generation statistical technique for testing complex path models. PLS-SEM is an alternative to another commonly used statistical approach—covariance-based structural equation modelling (CB-SEM). In this study, the PLS-SEM statistical technique was chosen for three main reasons 1) PLS-SEM can provide unique theoretical insights and prevent the misspecification of statistical models and hence erroneous results; 2) PLS-SEM is the preferable statistical technique when a model includes both reflective and formative constructs; and 3) PLS-SEM should be used when a model includes formative factors and has more than 40 - 50 indicators (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014).

Before testing the model, common method bias (CMB) for the constructs was checked. As recommended by Kock (2015) for examining CMB in PLS-SEM, the variance inflation factor (VIF) was calculated through the full collinearity test for all latent variables in the model. Table 8 shows full collinearity VIFs. The full collinearity VIF values for the constructs in the model in this study were below threshold 3.33 (Kock 2015). Hence, it confirms no CMB in this study and ascertains there is no possibility of misleading results.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Respondent Profiles

The following Table II shows the respondents' demographic information. Data was collected during lectures to ensure a good return of the questionnaire. Prior to answering, the participants were informed about the details of the objectives and nature of the study. The questionnaire was administered after asking participants for oral consent. Participants were thanked for their participation in the study.

Table II. Demographic Profiles

Demographic characteristic		Frequency's	Percent, %
Area	Keningau	250	64.3
	Kudat	139	35.7
Age	18-20	198	50.9
	21-23	168	43.2
	24-26	23	5.9
Gender	Male	106	27.2
	Female	283	72.8

The descriptive statistics of the independent and dependent variables of the sample are reported in Table III.

Table III. Descriptive results (range, mean, and SD) of emotion scale and psychological well-being

Measurement Variables	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Emotion Scale				
Perception of emotion	20.00	49.00	38.26	4.49
Managing own emotion	24.00	45.00	34.87	4.35
Managing other emotion	19.00	40.00	29.84	4.56
Utilisation of emotion	13.00	30.00	22.72	3.35
Psychological Well-being				
Autonomy	7.00	34.00	25.61	3.99
Environmental mastery	13.00	35.00	25.64	3.49
Personal growth	13.00	35.00	24.09	3.98
Positive relationship	12.00	30.00	21.72	3.24
Purpose in life	7.00	35.00	25.75	3.72
Self-acceptance	7.00	35.00	26.62	3.45

Difference in Psychological Well-being Scores Between Males and Females

In terms of gender and psychological well-being, an independent samples t-test is conducted to compare the perception toward psychological well-being based on gender. For autonomy ($t = 0.253$, $P > 0.000$), the mean value for males is 25.70, the standard deviation is 3.94, the mean for females is 24.34, and the standard deviation is 3.57. For environmental mastery ($t = 1.546$, $P > 0.000$), the mean value for males is 27.44, and the standard deviation is 3.51 and the mean for female is 26.93 and the standard deviation is 3.43, while for the positive relations with others ($t = -0.070$, $P > 0.000$), the mean value between genders had 21.70 and the standard deviation is 3.31 for the male and the mean for female is 21.72 and the standard deviation is 3.31. For self-acceptance ($t = 0.821$, $P > 0.000$), the mean value for male is 26.86 and the standard deviation is 3.01 and the mean for female is 26.53 and the standard deviation is 3.60. Personal growth ($t = 1.837$, $P > 0.000$), the mean value for men is 26.08 and the standard deviation is 3.26 and the mean for female is 25.47 and the standard deviation is 3.56. While, purpose in life ($t = 1.502$, $P > 0.000$), the mean value between genders had 26.04 and the standard deviation is 3.63 for the male, while the mean for female is 25.65 and the standard

deviation is 3.75. These results signify those males and female are not different in term of their perception toward all the dimensions of psychological well-being that were tested in this study.

Table IV. T-test result

Items	Gender	Mean	SD	t-value	Significant
Psychological Well-being	Male	154.09	15.92	0.692	0.608
	Female	152.72	17.85		
Autonomy	Male	25.70	3.94	0.253	0.801
	Female	25.58	4.02		
Environmental mastery	Male	26.08	3.26	1.546	0.097
	Female	25.47	3.56		
Personal growth	Male	24.19	3.89	1.837	0.670
	Female	24.05	4.01		
Positive relationship	Male	21.70	3.31	-0.070	0.854
	Female	21.72	3.23		
Purpose in life	Male	26.04	3.63	1.502	0.134
	Female	25.65	3.75		
Self-acceptance	Male	26.86	3.01	0.821	0.106
	Female	26.53	3.60		

Summary of Multiple linear regression analysis between Emotion Scale (Independent Variables) and Psychological well-being (Dependent Variable)

The results in Table V show that the coefficient of multiple correlation is 0.212, and its square is 0.042, which is significant at a 0.00 significance level. Regression analysis suggests that psychological well-being can explain the variations in the psychological well-being of university students.

Table V. Multiple linear regression

Dependent Variables	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	Std. Error	R ² Change	F	Sig.
Psychological Well-being	0.212	0.045	0.042	16.95019	0.045	17.847	<.001

Table VI shows that the F-value is statistically significant at the 0.00 level, which suggests that predictive variables (psychological well-being) can predict the criterion variable (emotion scale). Therefore, regression analysis is allowed and feasible.

Table VI. Summary of ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5127.588	1	5127.588	17.847	<.001 ^b
	Residual	108890.149	379	287.309		
	Total	114017.738	380			

a. Dependent Variable: Phycological Well-being

b. Predictors: (Constant), Emotion Scale

According to the results in Table VII, B 0.256, t = 4.225 (emotional scale), which is significant at a 0.00 significance level. It suggests that the emotion scale plays an important role in predicting students' psychological well-being. The results show that emotion scales are significant predictors of psychological well-being with greater contribution.

Table VII. Summary of Coefficients for Regression Analysis

		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	120.784	7.669		15.750	<.001
	Emotion Scale	.256	.061	.212	4.225	<.001

Independent variable: Emotion Scale

Dependent Variable: Psychological well-being

Measurement Model

Using second-order constructs is a commonly accepted exercise in modelling the relationship among constructs. The second-order construct is multidimensional, and both first- and second-order constructs included in the structural modelling can be either reflective or formative (Diamantopoulos et al., 2008). At this stage, the study estimated the measurement properties of second-order reflective constructs: Emotion Scale and Psychological Well-being.

Using the two-stage approach suggested by Henseler and Fassott (2010), Ringle et al. (2012) and Wetzels et al. (2009), the second-order reflective Emotion Scale and Psychological Well-being is measured by using construct scores derived from the first-order constructs (Becker et al., 2011; Wetzels et al., 2009). For the second-order construct, the validity and reliability of the measurement are also assessed.

Validity is assessed by examining the construct validity, convergent validity and discriminant validity. Table VIII below confirms that the loadings of the first-order variable on the second-order are more than the cut-off value of 0.70, with reference to Hair et al. (2011); Henseler et al. (2009) and Barclay et al. (1995). Other than that, as shown in the Table below, the results also confirmed that the AVEs of the second-order model are greater than 0.50. Thus, the results proved that convergent validity exists for the second-order constructs of this study.

The reliability of the reflective measurement model is checked by applying the composite reliability. Composite reliability is used instead of Cronbach alpha because composite reliability considers that indicators have different loadings. However, composite reliability can be interpreted the same way as Cronbach's alpha (Henseler et al. 2009). The composite reliability is generally interpreted as equal to Cronbach's coefficient alpha and has values between 0 and 1 where higher values indicate a higher level of reliability (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2014). Composite reliability values reflect the level to which construct indicators reveal the latent variables, and they should be greater than 0.70 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Dibbern & Chin, 2005; Gotz et al., 2010; and Urbach & Ahlemann, 2010). Table VIII shows that all first-order constructs displayed composite reliability between 0.773 and 0.882, well above the threshold value of 0.70.

Table VIII. Measurement Scale

Second Order	First Order	Loading	CR	AVE	VIF < 3.33
Emotion scale	Managing own emotion	0.594	0.882	0.544	2.937
	Managing Other Emotion	0.581			2.061
	Perception of Emotion	0.486			2.263
	Utilisation of emotion	0.581			1.697
Phycological Well-being	Autonomy	0.752	0.773	0.569	3.281
	Environmental mastery	0.756			1.192
	Personal growth	0.615			2.404
	Positive relationship	0.669			1.531
	Purpose in life	0.885			1.853
	Self-acceptance	0.759			1.553

Discriminant Validity

Henseler et al. (2015) endorsed measuring the correlation Heterotrait-monotraitratio (HTMT) to evaluate discriminant validity. This latest approach discloses the estimation of the true correlation between two constructs. A value of 0.90 is the threshold recommended for HTMT (Henseler et al.,

2015). Any value higher than 0.90 would indicate a lack of discriminant validity. Moreover, the confidence interval of HTMT should not include 1. Table IX below proves that the HTMT criterion had been fulfilled for this study's PLS model.

Table IX. HTMT Results

	#1	#2
#1 Emotion Scale		
#2 Psychological Well-being	0.525	

Structural Equation Modelling

The bootstrapping procedure was used to evaluate the indicators' weight significance, which also expressed their relative importance through loadings (Hair et al., 2011). Smart PLS was employed to evaluate the items' weight significance and relevance. The bootstrapping procedure for 1000 resamples (Chin, 2010; Ramayah et al., 2018) was used to evaluate the model. Test results in the direct effect of Emotion Scale and Psychological Well-being show that the path coefficient value is 0.075, which is close to the +1 value, the T- value is 4.303 (>1.96), and the p-value is 0.000 (<0.05), which indicates a significant relationship between both variable. The findings are supported by previous researchers (Rathakrishnan, Sanu, Yahaya, Singh & Kamaluddin, 2019).

Table X. Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Path Coefficient	Standard Deviation	t-Value	p-Value
Emotion Scale -> Phycological Well-Being	0.075	0.017	4.303	0

CONCLUSION

The aim of the study is to examine the emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among students in IPDAS, which are located in Keningau and Kudat in Sabah. In order for individuals to perform at their highest potential, live fuller lives, and actively contribute to society, the element of psychological well-being is crucial (Rathakrishnan, Sanu, Yahaya, Singh & Kamaluddin, 2019). Psychological well-being owned by individuals can help to grow emotions that are positive, reduce depression and negative behavior. Meanwhile, emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, express, understand, manage, and use emotions (Kotsou, Mikolajczak, Heeren, Grégoire & Leys, 2019). Furthermore, emotional intelligence is an ability possessed by individuals to understand and manage their own and other people's emotions accurately according to the situation that occurs (Safitri & Anisah, 2022)

In order to compare how gender affects perceptions of psychological well-being, an independent samples t-test is used. Our study indicates that there are no differences between males and females in terms of how they perceive all the aspects of psychological well-being that were assessed in this study. According to Lopez, Virgio & Ruiz (2019), in every category examined, both boys and girls displayed medium-high levels of well-being where the boys felt more satisfied than the girls and the girls displayed a larger sense of improvement and development of their self-potential.

A person's psychological well-being is certainly influenced by various factors, one of which is emotional intelligence. This means that the higher the emotional intelligence a person has, the higher the perceived level of psychological well-being (Pratiwi & Mulawarman, 2022). Our study found emotional intelligence influences the psychological well-being of students. When making judgements under pressure, emotional intelligence is crucial because it helps people make wiser choices, which has a knock-on effect on psychological health (Rathakrishnan, Sanu, Yahaya, Singh & Kamaluddin, 2019). Our results in the direct effect of the Emotion Scale and Psychological Well-being show that the path coefficient value is 0.075, close to the +1 value, and the T- value is 4.303

(>1.96). The p-value is 0.000 (<0.05), which indicates a significant relationship between both variables. This study also found a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being.

The result of this study will guide students to the importance of their emotional intelligence to the relation of individuals' psychological well-being. This study also implies to teachers, parents, and family members that emotional intelligence influences one's well-being with no differences in gender. Furthermore, in the 2023 budget, the government of Malaysia has invested in treating mental health problems more seriously; RM34.5 million was allocated for the development of the National Centre of Excellence for Mental Health (NCEMH) and the enhancement of mental health and psychosocial support services (Hakim, 2023). The Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia (MOHE), in collaboration with the Majlis Kaunseling dan Kerjaya Universiti-Universiti Awam Malaysia (MAKUMA), is in the process of developing a Mental Health Module for IPT Students to deal with stress, depression and anxiety (Azaman, 2021). For future research, it is suggested to widen the population of the studies. It is also advisable to do a comparative study between the two campuses and different institutes.

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