

Moderating Effect of Emotional Intelligence on the Relationship between Personality Traits and Employability

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Abstract: The main objectives of the study are to examine moderating role of emotional intelligence between personality traits and employability in the students of Malaysian public universities. The data were collected from (380) business students by applying stratified random sampling. The SEM and CFA Technique has adapted to examine relationship between personality trait emotional intelligence and employability. The findings of study proven that the moderating impact of emotional intelligence construct on relationship between personality trait and employability in the Malaysian business students. These findings may help policy makers to understand employability phenomena by different perspective. In the lieu, current study is included student view point about their emotional intelligence, personality trait employability. In further implication, these construct can be intervene during the studies to get high chances towards employment at the business world.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, employability, Malaysian public universities

INTRODUCTION

The success of individuals varies between people to people and researchers of human resource management searching best answered to query. In the examination of past literature on employability revealed that individual differences factors that influence on employability including personality factors [1] dispositions [2], motivation and skills factors (Haggard & Pollard). In these studies emotional intelligence has suggested by another human capital factor influence as the predictor of employability.

In the line of previous findings and results emotional intelligence, the construct has gained importance to predict to determine the life and career. Most of these findings endorse that it is on exploratory level [61] and to date any systematic relationship scarce. Thus the validity of emotional intelligence as the determinant of employability mostly on conceptualize work. From exception of [4, 3]. Most of the studies framing the study emotional intelligence as direct effect and outcome on employability. The current study claims that emotional intelligence may not affect by indirect effacing as moderation of variables.

Today's Employer given importance of hiring employee's personality preference through job-appropriate knowledge [5, 6]. Thus the aim of the study to examine the moderating effect of emotional intelligence between the personality trait and employability in the education sector. This study will make several contributions to the previous literature.

First, its response to seeing the trait factors has been utilized to explore the variability of employability. Following emotional intelligence factors is using as individual defense variables which may serve as the moderator variable. It is important to examine direct and moderating factors of personality. To best of the author, this might first attempt to examine the relationship between the trait and employability. Thus the focus of the study examines different individual factors (emotional intelligence, personality) across several studies has suggested examining that may influence employability of business graduates of Malaysia.

Theory and connections

The idea behind cognitive-affective Process theory is that individuals are both emotional and rational beings [7]. In a social context, coping and adaptation abilities is based on the integrative functioning of emotional (affective) and rational (cognitive) capacities [8]. It is through reason (cognitive reasoning ability) that individuals identify what emotions they are experiencing, discover the beliefs and values that gave rise to it, and decide what action, if any, to take on the face of it [60]. Therefore, emotional ability (Emotional Intelligence) and contribute to the employability of an individual. The emotional centers of the brain are intricately interwoven with the neocortical areas involved in cognitive learning. This is because there is a capability limit of attention and student might has less ability to remember, hear or understand what a book or teacher is saying. In brief, a

direct relation exists between learning and emotion. As the several previous studies has concluded that emotion (emotional intelligence) both contribute to the development of the trait. This brings independent variables of the trait in the debate. Sternberg [62] defines successful intelligence as “the ability to balance the needs to adapt to, shape and select environments in order to attain success (however within one’s sociocultural context).” Limiting this definition to a working environment, it can be regarded as a synonym for the concept of employability.

Employability

Mc Quaid & Lindsay [9] defined Employability defined pragmatic and diverse aspect i.e. individual, external and personal factors and Hillage & Pollard [10] claim that different component of skills, Alternatively, Robinson [11] suggested that it’s considered on employment center as the set of skills to gaining job; or capability to gain job. But on the single note at the international setting, employability has not been treated as the uniform definition [9]. However, the ability of the graduate to gain the employment [12]. Demographic variables such age [13], pre-graduate experience [14], and academic reputation of the institute [15] have been demonstrated and considering significant predictor of employability.

As the employability researched has gained momentum, the scholar has paid more attention to external employability factors. Internal factors are Skills [63, 16-18] attributes [19] and attribute self-directedness or personal agency [20, 21]. A researcher from the field of management research has considered employability is influenced by the abilities of an individual, qualities, and expertise to understand and fully cater their future opportunities [22]. The Previous literature has focused extensively on external employability. Contrarily, internal employability suggested by researchers as a line of future research. In the relation, Rothwell and Arnold’s [23] is developed the model to examine unique in the sense that it caters to internal employability as an additional indicator of employability [24, 25]. Rothwell [26] developed and tested model of employability (self-perceived) provide uniqueness because of self-reporting measure gaining popularity in management research but the due unavailability of empirical research, model yet in the preliminary stage in the research world. Later, enhanced this model to (self-perceived) employability model for the undergraduate-specific in the [23]. In the developing of the model suggested model might help the institution and government to examine graduate unemployment and perception of the student regarding their employability which will ultimately enhance the knowledge of the complexity of employability, but it would make rational that past study has ignored the aspect of employability (self-perceived) and scarce literature has found. There is the need to research

concerning Rothwell [23] employability model which is still unexplored, and no empirical evidence has identified specifically with skill factors as predictors and indicators.

Emotional intelligence

The researcher from the field of human resource management has considered Employability by a person’s values, philosophy, emotions, sense of calling or mission, unconscious motives and traits [27, 28]. Some of the author’s supports employability improves a person’s suitability for appropriate and sustainable employment [29, 30, 22, 59]. Leggat, Farrell, and Couper [58] suggested that emotional intelligence is important predictors in life and career because as an individual differences best between stimulus and behavior. Furthermore, it’s linkage to the differences of coping mechanism to incorporate emotional intelligence in the behavior, especially in the rapid changing environment it would be right to say that emotion intelligence has a direct influence on integral copying process [31, 32]. In the sum, the word of for use this coping process is employability.

Moreover there is apt evidence proven that emotional intelligence considering important predictor of employability related outcomes [33, 34] Nonetheless, several aspects of emotional intelligence has ignored or are yet not reported, including ability model ,competency model and mixed model which are suggested to be examined by Atta, Ather, and Bano [35]. Ottino, [64] recommended further studies should be conducted to explore the relationship between employability and other variables, such as emotional intelligence [65]. An exploration of how both cognition and emotion, for example, affect employability competence would be of value. Poon [66] suggested that emotional intelligence should not be observed directly. Although the importance of emotional intelligence has been observed as moderator in the several setting such as, i.e., the moderating variability of emotional intelligence between the several variables, i.e., Ciarrochi, Deane & Anderson [36] suggested that emotional intelligence has significant and positive role in the stress and mental health. Secondly, Jordan, Ashkanasy & Hartel [37] claim that moderating effect emotional intelligence has found between the emotional and behavior reactions to job security. The Same moderating effect found by. Karimi, Leggat, Farrell & Couper [38] and Pahi and Hamid [25] exploring moderating effect of emotional intelligence between the wellbeing and perceived job stress. Moreover, several researchers have proposed theories and attempted to clear this controversy how the predictors of behaviors have moderated by the individual differences. However, there is no consistently reliable conclusion drawn as yet how emotional intelligence moderate the role of the

employability skills and employability (self-perceived) [67, 34] specifically on the undergraduate level.

H1: Emotional intelligence moderates between personality trait and employability.

Personality Trait

The personality factors have been the center of many studies. Many studies were exploring the character variations. The researcher mentioned that people take ownership of their careers and act proactively. In the ownership of career meta-competencies seems vital resources in sustaining their employability is necessary [39, 3, 22, 40]. Additionally, personality traits as a career meta-competency that influences employability [39, 3, 22, 41, 42] nevertheless how these individual differences made variation between skills and employability has never conceptualized or not reporting yet. Moreover, Meta-analysis of big five or five factor model of personality with employability has limited literature [43- 45]. However, few researchers have examined the role of individual differences in predictions effect in the context of soft skills [46].

The relationship between personality traits and employability (self-perceived) has reported in the several sagacity however how emotional intelligence has moderate the relationship between them, due to variation how individual perceive about the self-perceived employability. Although the importance of personality traits have been observed in the past studies at student level little attention has been paid. To summarize, available literature with a focus on skill factor, consider the viewpoint of the faculty, employer or student. Additionally, some of the studies focused on the faculty or industry basis [68]. However, review of the literature suggests that there is no attempt has yet been made to structurally map out all the antecedents together, i.e. personality factors, emotional intelligence factors, and employability from a student's perspective.

Therefore, understanding and examination of employability construct at the individual level, specifically with the moderating effect of emotional intelligence and personality is critical especially in huge contextual, and the theoretical gap exists in the body of knowledge. This study attempts to fill the gap by analyzing the relationship between the personality trait, emotional intelligence, Skills and its ultimate effect on Employability.

H2: The personality traits have the effect on employability.

METHODOLOGY

The study confine employability issues of business students and current facts endorsing that business graduates are top most in the youth unemployment in Malaysia. That provides reason behind this research focusing on the four universities of Malaysia (USM, UUM, UM AND UITM,). These universities were producing the 35% percent business graduates out of total [46]. The selected universities represent the exact mix of diversity of Malaysian students. Moreover, these universities are located in the different location of Peninsular Malaysia.

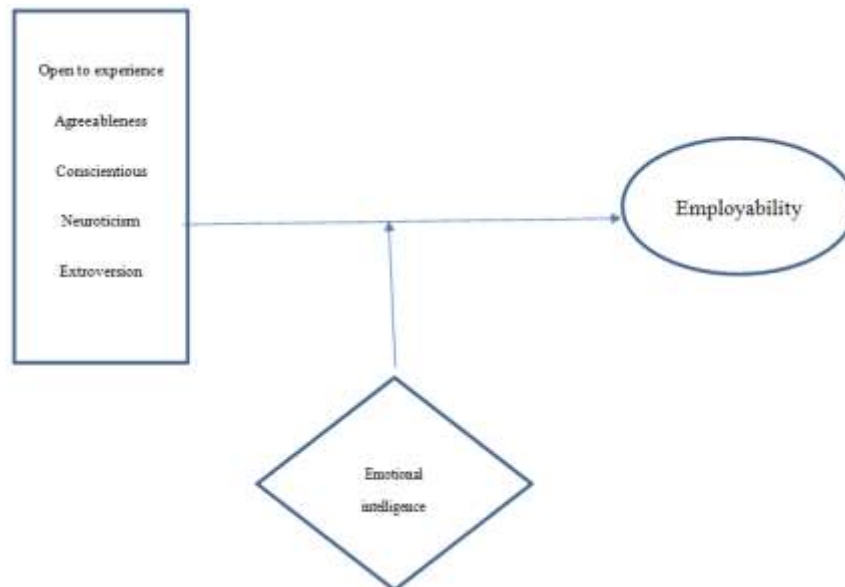
Research instrument

The employability is broad term nonetheless this study is using self-perceived employability which is "perceived ability to attain sustainable employment appropriate to one's qualification level." The Employability of students will examine by four further items had been generated by the authors of the undergraduate study [23]. While the scale had not performed particularly well previously ($\alpha = .70$), Emotional intelligence server has adapted from the Bradberry & Greaves [47], and it's also based on the Goleman's etel [48] model. This instrument has the four dimensions to measure the emotional intelligence. This research instrument contains the 28 items. The personality trait will be used as the 44 big five inventory BFI adopted from the [49-51]. The students of the universities will be the respondents. The reason behind choosing these respondents is that they continue to attract criticism from industry stakeholders with regard to their current expertise and personal attributes [69; 70].

Sampling

The suggested sampling technique for this study is stratified cluster sampling. In a survey research, determining an appropriate sample size is essential [71]. The total population size data has retrieved from the website of Higher Education website which revealed that every year approximately, 44720 business students have graduated from the all the IPTA universities and these four universities are producing approximately 35 % of all the business graduates (68025 students). Krejcie and Morgan [52] Sampling size formula have adapted to calculate the sample size which is near to be around 400.

Theoretical framework



RESULTS

Table-1.1: Descriptive Statistics

	EI	EP	PA	PC	PE	PN	PO
EI	0.70753						
EP	0.49376	0.72421					
PA	0.28281	0.42445	0.83603				
PC	0.22518	0.37913	0.05764	0.75327			
PE	-0.19492	-0.43613	-0.01622	-0.19226	0.71862		
PN	0.38826	0.39556	0.19838	0.33450	-0.06781	0.71404	
PO	0.30434	0.35037	-0.01433	0.54244	-0.20217	0.20234	0.82117

Table-1.2: Reliability Statistics

Latent variable	Composite Reliability	Average	R Square
EI	0.853925	0.500603	0.539365
EP	0.884105	0.524474	
PA	0.818721	0.698938	
PC	0.788701	0.567423	
PE	0.435203	0.516418	
PN	0.611242	0.509849	
PO	0.804087	0.674312	

Table-1.3: Path coefficient

	Original Sample	Standard Error (STERR)	T Statistics
EI -> EP	0.968837	0.206389	4.694218
PA -> EP	0.66857	0.164668	4.060115
PA * EI -> EP	0.512614	0.224029	2.288162
PC -> EP	0.445086	0.211143	2.10798
PC * EI -> EP	0.436512	0.251759	1.733851
PE -> EP	0.321907	0.057476	5.600703
PE * EI -> EP	0.023845	0.114804	0.207697
PN -> EP	0.053148	0.080201	0.662688
PN * EI -> EP	0.132397	0.089799	1.474366
PO -> EP	0.447041	0.238175	1.876946
PO * EI -> EP	0.502946	0.363393	1.384026

In the meanwhile from the point view of direct relationship emotional intelligence has the positive and significant effect (4.694218) Agreeableness have consistent relationship between employability PA > EM (4.060115). Conscientious have consistent relationship between employability PC > EM (2.10798). Extroversion has the consistent relationship between employability PE > EM (5.600703). Neurocism has not consistent relationship between employability PN > EM (0.662688). Open to experience have consistent relationship between employability PO > EM (1.876946).

The moderating effect of emotional intelligence and employability is observed in the currents statistics as mentioned above. The emotional intelligence moderates between Agreeableness and employability PA * EI -> EP (2.288162). The emotional intelligence moderates between Conscientious and employability PC * EI -> EP (1.733851). The emotional intelligence does not moderates between Extroversion and employability PE * EI -> EP (0.207697). The emotional intelligence does not moderates between Neurocism and employability PN * EI -> EP (1.474366). The emotional intelligence does not moderate between Open to experience and employability PO * EI -> EP (1.384026).

DISCUSSION

Individual differences always play the greater role in the personality of any individual this debate already concluded in the literature section that individual differences effect on the learning and perceiving. The individual differences can examine by the different manner, but personality traits are best to examine the personality of any subject. Further, an undergraduate's personality may influence their academic performance [53] and ability to attain employment [54]. When the philosophy of personality introduced in the business world and it's understood the different personality has performed differently in the different circumstance and produced different work outcomes. The current study is examining graduate personality traits may provide human resource practitioners and educators with a better understanding of the cause of certain gaps in workplace performance and help in identifying strategies for dealing with the problem [55].

In the current study concentrated, personality trait of big five model in the business graduates and employability. The previous studies concluded that high in the agreeableness individuals deems to be flexible, open and adaptable [72, 55]. This characteristics has required in personality of individuals when they need to join any organization. Same can be applied on the student level. The students high in the agreeableness easy to adapt any business environment and perceive employment opportunities better and enhance

employability. Conscientious examination were consistent with employability of the student. The conscientious express the individual with consistency in the work, desire to work and completed task well. At the student level, individual who were considering the better conscientious extend consistent to complete task well and consider more employable.

On the moderating effects emotional intelligence effect on the work outcomes [33, 56]. The studies examine the variability of emotional intelligence level on the personality and personality trait on the student. The current study was examining the moderating effect on the emotional intelligence and employability at student level. In the lieu current study findings has presented that high in emotion controls and perceive in the individuals enhance the relationship between the personality traits (Agreeableness and conscientious) and employability. On the Contrary personality traits (Extroversion, open to experience and neuroticism) does not effect by the emotional intelligence and afterwards on employability.

This concluded that personality traits were initial level of individuals and do provide the consistency in the results. These findings were supporting by the Jackson [55] screening the personality students found variation in the personality traits and suggested that intervention on that stage might provide the positive outcomes such as employability.

On the other aside the personality trait has observed in the current study, previous studies have focused most of the time on the worker level employability [23]. This study might be considered first as the best knowledge of author in this regards by examining the personality trait of the student in the relationship between employability of Malaysian undergrads students. The findings of study proven that the personality trait effects has proven that personality trait has the greater impact on the perception of employability. The student who are more capable to controlled the personality trait factors they concerned that more employable. This is parable with the theory of traits of person has the effect on the perception of employability in the student. If the person is extroversion, open to experience or agreeableness chances of being employable will be greater, and perception about employability will be improved. The previous study found that perception about the capability and abilities is near about the state of reality.

Limitations

The study has used the technique of cross-sectional survey in which the response of respondent has observed in the due period that not permits the findings to conclude in the casual relationship. Between the variables [57], the limitation of the study is the

construct using in the study, especially from the angle of emotional intelligence construct. Past studies utilized several constructs of emotional intelligence and they can be used to the potential for the future research.

Area of Future Research

This study is using moderating factors of emotional intelligence on the relationship of personality traits and employability. The other factors of employability such external factors such economy, employer demand not been considered in the current. Also, these factors might examine in the future recommendation. Moreover, using of multidimensional of the moderating variable might be considered the vast area of research in an upcoming research area. The previous on personality traits can be divided into the two stream of understanding the one the employee and second on the student's side.

CONCLUSION

The first objective has achieved by personality trait (Extroversion, Open to experience, agreeableness, conscientious and Neuroticism) effects on employability. This object is achieved by designing of five Hypothesis in which 3 found positive and significant and two were consider insignificant. The second examined the moderating impact of emotional intelligence between personality traits (Extroversion, Open to experience, agreeableness, conscientious and Neuroticism) and employability provides the empirical evidence between the proposed relationships.in the lieu, three hypothesis found positive and two found insignificant in the study.

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