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Assessing the Emotional Intelligence Profile of Public Librarians in Malaysia: Descriptive Analysis

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Abstract:

This article reports the findings of a study that measures the Emotional Intelligence (EI) among librarians in Public Libraries in Malaysia. Public librarians are important assets since they are social agents that advocate the development of a knowledge society in Malaysia. As employees in service organizations, they are expected to be highly dynamic and provide quality services. These jobs involve communicating, empathizing with, understanding, and learning from other members working in the organizations. These skills require not only a high degree of intellectual ability but a high level of EI. EI, therefore, seems essential to be measured for library employees' understanding of other people's feelings, and for them to be involved in a relationship that will facilitate successful management and performance. The participants comprised of public librarians randomly selected from Malaysian public libraries and the National Library of Malaysia. Quantitative data were collected using a Public Librarian Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (PubLIBEIQ). Adopting a survey research methodology involving 180 librarians working in public libraries in Malaysia, the findings suggest that their EI level is relatively high. The findings can be used by the relevant authorities to identify the required training, job recruitment; workshop and curriculum need to further improve their EI level leading towards better job performance.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Public Librarians, Malaysia

1.0   INTRODUCTION

The importance of the Emotional Intelligence (EI) has been well-documented in the literature. The (EI) skills can be defined as the competency in recognizing and managing our feelings and others. Today, the EI has gradually become more relevant to both workplace growth and people improvement (Khokhar &Kush 2009). Singh (2005) listed 25 different competencies to be required in different professions, which include librarians. Despite extensive studies that have been done in several settings, e.g. banking sector (Wae, 2010); mental health institutions (Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002); public accounting firms (Chia, 2005); governmental organizations (Ghoniem et al., 2011); as well as professionals like policemen (Afolabi et al., 2010); teachers (Craig, 2008); ballet dancers (Petrides, Niven & Mouskounti, 2006); salespeople (Rozell, Pettijohn & Parker, 2006) and debt collectors (Bachman, Stein, Campbell, Sitarenios, 2000). Unfortunately, it is very rare to study the EI in the context of library services. No doubt, several past studies that attempted to study the EI among librarians (eg. Budd (1998) and Mill & Lodge (2006) had explored the EI among academic librarians; Browne (2005) studied the EI among law librarians while Hernon, Giesecke and Alire (2007) studied emotional intelligence and its components in academic libraries. However, they were not as comprehensive as studies done in other professions such as bankers (Wae, 2010); government servants (Ghoniem, 2011); policemen (Afoldi et al, 2010) and teachers (Craig, 2008). It is for this reason, this study was carried out with the aim of assessing the EI among public librarians. The findings of this study have increased our understanding about the EI and suggest appropriate training to increase EI level among librarians.

2.0   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Overview of Emotional Intelligence

The EI term was first used by Mayer and Salovey (1990) which refers to the ability to recognize feelings of self and other people's feelings as a guide to think and behave. Then, Goleman (1995) popularized the term as a potential factor in understanding and predicting the performance of employees in the workplace. Goleman (1995) defined EI as the ability to understand emotions and emotional self-esteem of others to motivate oneself and manage personal emotions and good relationships with others. Although the term was popularly used in the 1990s, it has been used much earlier to refer to other social wisdom, as mentioned by Thornike et al. (1927) to mean the ability to understand and connect with someone. Nonetheless, lately, the EI concept has received much attention in various fields which is manifested by the number of research activities that have been stimulated, since its first appearance in the psychological literature 20 years ago (Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts, 2009 and Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner (2004).

Researchers such as Boyatzis (1982), Bar-On (1997) and Mayer & Salovey (1990) have indicated in their studies that competencies based on the EI behavior have affected more than the IQ for success. Goleman (1995, 1998 and 2001) extended the concept of EI by linking it with the context of the workplace. Emulating Goleman's idea, Cooper & Sawaf (1997) in their study found that efficiency in managing emotions well leads to the achievement of trust, loyalty, commitment, innovation and performance improvement of the individuals, groups and organizations.

In the context of Malaysia, a study done by Noriah et al. (2006) has shown that the EI has a positive relationship with the cognitive ability and the competency of a person in getting something done. In another study, a group of researchers from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, led by Noriah & Siti Rahayah (2006) carried out further research to understand the profile of EI among public sector workers in Malaysia involving individuals from a variety of occupations including teachers, nurses, police, prison officers and immigration officials. The aforementioned study has apparently raised the interest of many other researchers in Malaysia who began to study this concept from various angles using a variety of subjects (i.e. Nurul Azzah, 2010; Md. Yusof, Rozman, 2007; Rorlinda, 2007; Syed Najmuddin, 2005; Sidek, 2005; Aminuddin, Tajularipin & Rohaizan, 2009; Najeemah, 2012 and Syafrimen, 2004). However, many of the studies looked at the profile of EI among individuals who work as teachers, lecturers or secondary school students and in relation to task performance. However, no reports that assessed the level of EI in public libraries were found.

2.2   Models and Framework for Assessing EI

The literature unveiled that researchers have developed various models and frameworks for measuring the EI. Among the prominent ones are;

- Trait EI Questionnaire (TEIQue) (Petrides, 2009)
- Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) (Bar-On, 1997)
- Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS), (Salovey et al., 1995)
- Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS), (Schutte et al., 1998)
- Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI), (Boyatzis, Goleman & Rhee, 2000)
- Workplace Swinburne University Emotional Intelligence Test (Workplace SUEIT), (Palmer & Stough, 2002)
- Workgroup Emotional Intelligence Profile (WEIP) (Jordan et al., 2002)
- Wong & Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) (Wong & Law, 2002)

In the context of this study, Goleman's (1998) emotional competency model dimensions was selected. This model was chosen due to two reasons. Firstly, Goleman can be considered as the authority in EI as he was the founder of the EI model, and that the model is a measurement of an individual's performance in the workplace, or EI-based performance model. Secondly, the Goleman dimension (ie. Self awareness, self management, social awareness and relationship management) is largely attractive and has high reliability and validity, which is between the range of 0.69 to 0.9, as tested by many researchers (ie. Van, 2004; Sarboland, 2012; Bipath, 2007 and Ealias & George, 2012). The model is divided into four domains, which are Self Awareness, Self Management, Social Awareness and Relationship Management. The Self-Awareness domain is further divided into self confidence, accurate self assessment and emotional self awareness. The Self Management domain has six variables; emotional self-control, transparency, adaptability, achievement orientation, initiative and optimism. Meanwhile, variables like empathy, organizational awareness and service orientation are used to measure the Social Awareness domain. The Relationship Management domain is measured using variables; namely developing others, inspirational leadership, change catalyst, influence, conflict management and teamwork and collaboration.

2.3   Emotional Intelligence Required By Malaysian Public Librarians

The EI of public librarians is demanding and generally many have to go beyond their regular working hours to provide their users with a well-serviced and active library. Their duties are varied and numerous. However in Malaysia, no nationally accepted list of EI for public librarians has yet been developed. Some writers have developed lists of related skills and competencies that are generally appropriate for generic, attitude, personality, intrapersonal, interpersonal and soft skills (NLM, 2004, PSD, 2004, MAMPU, 2006 and INTAN, 1985).

Hence, EI is not a new concept in the Malaysian public services as several studies have been conducted in the Malaysian setting. Public services should be seen by Malaysians in a larger function, in relation to the larger global context. To achieve this aim, the government has re-examined the strategies, programs and methodologies, and assessed the professional needs, in terms of the ability, skills and training, of civil servants (Najib, 2009 and Ahmad Sarji, 1996). One of the skills required among civil servants is EI (Sidek, 2009). EI competencies developed by theorists are not new to the Malaysian public service practitioners, and have emerged as elements of various competency profiles that are currently used/adopted.

Since 1957, the concept of EI with ethics and integrity has been demonstrated in all programs and planning of public services to job performance. To improve and fully implement EI skills, the government has constantly introduced various programs and efforts, which emphasize on moral values and integrity in public

service. Since the 1980s, in particular, more attention has been given to the concepts of "Clean, Efficient and Trustworthy" (Bersih, Cekap, Amanah); "The integration of Islamic values" (Penerapan Nilai-nilai Islam); "Excellent Work Culture" (Budaya Kerja Cemerlang); "Work Code of Ethics" (Kod Etika Kerja); "Client Charter" (Piagam Pelanggan), "ISO 9000" (MAMPU, 2006).

Similarly, public servants need to uphold the "Twelve Pillars". The Twelve Pillars has been approved and is widely distributed at the national level to encourage individuals to emulate the values that they serve within the organization to become more productive and advocates of high performance (INTAN, 1985). The Twelve Pillars are: (1) time value, (2) the success of perseverance; (3) enjoyment/pleasure of working; (4) dignity of simplicity; (5) key/value character; (6) the good things; (7) the influence of positive examples; (8) duty obligation; (9) economic policy; (10) patience; (11) increase in talent; and (12) joy of creativity/creation/originality.

The Malaysian government is aware that the public sector is the most important instrument in the country's management and administration, and service delivery for the national development (Sidek, 2009). Therefore, the practice of ethics and integrity should be reflected in all dealings. Integrity, depth, and upholding moral values, as well as being free from corruption and misuse of power, continue to be strengthened. In an effort to prevent unethical conduct and promote EI skills among civil servants, the government has established a Public Complaints Bureau (PCB), as a mechanism through which the public can make complaints on abuse of power in the civil service (Thoposamy, 2009).

The Malaysian Administrative, Modernization and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU) was established with the purposes of starting a change in the government, to ensure that the public services are modern, efficient and effective, with good morals and ethics. In an effort to strengthen the public sector governance, the government has established a Special Cabinet Committee on Integrity of Government Management, the core business of government management integrity.

3.0   METHODOLOGY

The conduct of this study involved the survey research methodology. In this research, the population of the study was the total number of public librarians working in public libraries and the National Library of Malaysia. However, only librarians of Grades S41 and above were selected. This grade level is claimed to be working under stress as they face a lot of duties and responsibilities, handling services in good manner and multitasking where these can affect their work performance. Those at the professional level are required to directly contribute to knowledge society development. Therefore, their roles and responsibilities which are sturdy and challenging can influence their performance. The sampling technique used was a stratified simple random sampling using 180 public librarians. Quantitative data were collected using a Public Librarian Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (PubLIBEIQ) that consists of 61 items. The questionnaire was developed based on the work of Goleman (1995; 1998); Boyatzis (2002); Bipath (2007); Saemah et al. (2008), Lugo (2009) and Saiful, Fuad and Rahman (2010). All measurements must be accompanied by a scale. All measures adopted the following scale: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Sometimes Disagree, (4) Not sure, (5) Sometimes Agree, (6) Agree, and (7) Strongly Agree.

3.1   Reliability of the Instruments

The highest consistency is for Relationship Management, Self Management and Social Awareness variables which represent more than 0.7 scores respectively, while the lowest consistency values is Self Awareness variables which are 0.69. Sekaran (2000) argued that the minimum accepted level is 0.60; otherwise the instrument is considered poor, while Dillon, Madden & Firtle (1994) indicated that scores over 0.50 are acceptable. Detailed Cronbach alpha scores base is presented in Table 1. Following the factor analysis, the number of variables of the research model was reduced by two. Specifically, the original 'developing others' and 'inspirational leadership' variables were combined and renamed as transformational leadership. The reliability analysis found that the variable 'initiative' of Self Management was deleted due to Cronbach alpha values that are very poor or below 0.6.

Table 1
Reliability of instrument measures

Measures	No. of Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Self Awareness	3	10	0.69
Self Management	5	18	0.75
Social Awareness	3	10	0.71
Relationship Management	6	23	0.87

4.0   FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1   Respondents' Demographic Profiles

Out of the 180 public librarians in the sample, 32% or 58 were male whereas 68.2% or 122 were female. In terms of position, 80% of the respondents were librarians, 3% served as senior assistant directors, 12% served as deputy directors, while only 5% served as directors. About 24% of the respondents had served as librarians for one to five years, 29% had served for six to ten years, 21% for 11-15 years, 7% for 16 - 20 years, 4% for 21 – 25 years, 14% for 26 – 30 years and 1% for more than 30 years.

With reference to the age of the respondents, n=30 or (16.7%) of the respondents indicated they were between the ages of 21 and 29. The majority of the respondents (n= 82 or 45.6%) were between the ages of 30 and 39, while 19.4% of them were reported being between the ages of 40 and 49 while 33 (18.3 %,) were over the age of 49. In terms of seniority, the majority of the respondents or 75.6% were in grade S41, 6.11% grade S44 or senior librarians, 14.44%, grade S48, while higher grade or S54 and Premier Grade in Public Sector (Jawatan Utama Sektor Awam – JUSA) comprised of 7 respondents (3.89%).

4.2   Emotional Intelligence Level

4.2.1   Self Awareness

Self-awareness denotes the ability to recognize emotions and their effects (Boyatzis, 2002). Among the three variables, the highest mean score stood at 5.913, while the lowest mean score recorded a value of 5.722, and the overall mean score of the three competencies is 5.840 as depicted in Figure 1.

Self-confidence to some extent has to do with self-esteem and the ability to do something (Goleman, 1998). In the aspect of the public librarians' self-confidence, it may be considered high with a score of 5.91 mean value. This figure reflects that librarians generally agreed that they can make their own decisions rationally and believe in themselves to be capable of carrying out the job of a librarian. Consequently, they are likely to feel comfortable if required to make decisions and work independently. Thus, the high scoring can be justified.

Accurate Self-assessment is one's ability to learn, or the strengths and limitations as the second variable of Self Awareness scored mean value is 5.89. This signifies that respondents generally agreed that they were aware of their ability and potential as well as know how to use their ability and potential for their success in the organization. The situation can be possibly explained by the fact that they demonstrate an ebullience in learning where they need to improve and welcome constructive criticism and feedback through self assessments annually.

The lowest competency of Self Awareness domain is Emotional Self Awareness, which recorded a mean of 5.722. Emotional self-awareness is a person's ability to recognize emotions and their effects (Boyatzis, 2002). Librarians perhaps recognize the acquaintances between their moods and what they think, act, and convey. Since they are working in the public sector, they perhaps are required to be aware of the appropriate emotion when dealing with others. Different situations require them to exhibit different emotions to deliver good services.

Figure 1
Descriptive profile of Self Awareness

Items	N = 180					
	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Dev.	Var.	Min	Max
Emotional Self Awareness						
1. I recognize how my feelings affect my performance	5.644	0.076	1.022	1.046	2	7
2. I know which emotions I am feeling and why	5.738	0.058	.7865	0.619	3	7
3. I realize the links between my feelings and what I think, do, and say	5.783	0.059	.7929	0.629	3	7
Average	**5.722**	**0.064**	**0.867**	**0.765**	**3**	**7**
Accurate Self Assessment						
4. I am open to new perspectives	5.870	0.057	0.774	0.656	3	7
5. I know my ability and potential	6.000	0.060	0.812	0.659	3	7
6. I am open to feedback for self-development	5.880	0.063	0.854	0.729	2	7
7. I know how to use my ability and potential for my success	5.830	0.061	0.822	0.676	3	7
Average	**5.895**	**0.060**	**0.816**	**0.680**	**3**	**7**
Self Confident						
8. I am always confident in doing daily work	5.878	0.059	0.796	0.633	3	7
9. I can make my own decision rationally	5.800	0.060	0.808	0.653	3	7
10. I believe myself to be capable for a job	6.061	0.056	0.749	0.560	3	7
Average	**5.913**	**0.058**	**0.784**	**0.615**	**3**	**7**
Average Self Awareness Dimension	**5.840**	**0.060**	**0.821**	**0.686**	**2**	**7**

1 =Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Somewhat Disagree; 4 = Not Sure; 5 = Somewhat Agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly Agree

4.2.2 Self Management

Figure 2
Descriptive profile of Self Management

Items	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Dev.	Var.	Min	Max
N = 180						
Emotional Self Control						
1. I stay composed, positive, and unflappable even in trying moments	5.606	0.065	0.868	0.754	3	7
2. I can manage my impulsive feelings and distressing emotions well	5.622	0.062	0.833	0.694	2	7
3. I can control my sadness or angry feeling even when I'm having a problem	5.694	0.06	0.806	0.649	3	7
4. I can control myself in any situation	5.703	0.063	0.845	0.714	3	7
Average	**5.656**	**0.063**	**0.838**	**0.703**	**2**	**7**
Transparency						
5. I carry out my responsibilities and the trust of my organization in doing daily work	6.244	0.042	0.566	0.32	5	7
6. I will ensure transparency, openness, and fairness in the procedures for services	6.189	0.045	0.605	0.366	5	7
7. I act with integrity even when it is inconvenient	6.233	0.045	0.599	0.359	5	7
8. I act honestly even when there is a significant risk	6.017	0.057	0.758	0.575	3	7
9. I continuously learn in order to improve my performance	5.831	0.061	0.822	0.676	3	7
Average	**6.103**	**0.050**	**0.670**	**0.459**	**3**	**7**
Adaptability						
10. I adapt my responses and tactics to fit fluid circumstances	5.894	0.059	0.787	0.62	2	7
11. I can reallocate my tasks and responsibilities to fit the situation	5.933	0.057	0.767	0.588	2	7
12. I apply standard procedures flexibility	5.978	0.056	0.747	0.558	3	7
13. When I feel that my approach is not working, I can easily change to another approach	6.012	0.059	0.798	0.637	2	7
Average	**5.954**	**0.058**	**0.775**	**0.601**	**2**	**7**
Achievement Orientation						
14. I am results-oriented, with a high drive to meet objectives and standards	5.856	0.063	0.846	0.716	2	7
15. I set challenging goals and take calculated risk	5.634	0.07	0.937	0.878	2	7
Average	**5.745**	**0.067**	**0.892**	**0.797**	**2**	**7**
Optimism						
16. I see setbacks as due to manageable circumstance rather than a personal flaw	5.794	0.055	0.745	0.555	2	7
17. I operate from hope of success rather than fear of failure	5.883	0.062	0.834	0.696	2	7
18. I am persistent in seeking goals despite obstacles and setbacks	5.938	0.059	0.792	0.628	2	7
Average	**5.872**	**0.059**	**0.790**	**0.626**	**2**	**7**
Average Emotional self management Dimension	**5.866**	**0.058**	**0.775**	**0.610**	**2**	**7**

1 =Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Somewhat Disagree; 4 = Not Sure; 5 = Somewhat Agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly Agree

Figure 2 displays the descriptive profile of the Self Management domain. The five-variable measure the Self Management domain in terms of Optimism, Achievement Orientation, Adaptability, Transparency and Emotional Self Control. All items recorded a mean value greater than 5.6 and the overall mean score stood at 5.866

According to Reed (2005), transparency may be said to have a similar concept with the integrity demanded of a person to take action consistent with the trust or responsibility. As shown in Figure 2, the value of transparency competency stood at a mean value of 6.013 and it is highly possible that public librarians really comply with the integrity concepts proposed by the government. In line with this, public librarians perhaps acquire these skills as part of their work activities.

Adaptability is "the ability to be flexible and work effectively within a variety of changing situations, and with various individuals or groups" (Goleman, 1998). The majority of the respondents mostly applied this competency with an average mean score of 5.954. The results of the analysis have evidently shown that

librarians tended to agree that they are more adaptable and flexible. Such librarians are flexible in adapting to new challenges, and flexible in their thinking in the face of a new environment. Furthermore, public librarians are most probably required to rotate and change their workplace within the library. Thus, they are required to adapt themselves accordingly wherever they serve, be it the cataloguing department, the circulation department, the IT department or any other department.

Optimism is the commitment to achieve ambitions and goals despite obstacles and barriers. The average score for means of optimism is 5.872. Based on this result, it is explicit that librarians possess optimism skills in dealing with others. The finding simply suggests that optimism as a skill of the librarians in Malaysia is almost no different from employees of other professions in terms of applying optimism in their workplace (Noriah, 2004; Yap, 2011; Khalili, 2006). They deal more positively with others and are willing to face a difficult task, but will try to solve it properly to achieve their mission.

With regards to the Achievement orientation, it is a concept, which emphasizes the aim to enhance performance, or the desire for success of which has been designated. Respondents provided a strong agreement on the statement asserting that the Achievement Orientation competency strongly supports the performance in service operations, as evidenced by a mean score of 5.745. Without these espousals, the organizational and individual performance is almost impossible. These efforts ensure their key performance index (KPI); mission and goals are worthy and attainable as promoted by their top management.

Bipath (2006) identified emotional self-control as the "ability to keep one's impulsive feelings and emotions under control and restrain negative actions when provoked, when faced with opposition or hostility from others, or when working under pressure." Emotional Self-Control indicates the lowest variable mean of 5.656 within the Self Management domain. This may be due to the nature of the public librarians' work being too complex. They deal with different kinds of user groups, which make it hard for them to control their emotions when handling users in the library.

4.2.3 Social Awareness

Figure 3
Descriptive Profile Of Social Awareness

Items	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Dev.	Var.	Min	Max
Empathy						
1. I always show sensitivity and understand others' perspectives	5.878	0.060	0.803	0.644	3	7
2. I am attentive to emotional cues and am a good listener	5.989	0.055	0.740	0.547	3	7
3. I can understand and feel other feelings as if I was them	5.700	0.067	0.896	0.803	3	7
4. I feel a real sense of love and caring for the people I interact with at work	5.856	0.068	0.910	0.828	2	7
Average	**5.856**	**0.063**	**0.837**	**0.706**	**2**	**7**
Organizational Awareness						
5. I can understand informal structure in this organization	5.550	0.074	0.993	0.986	2	7
6. I know the organization's informal or unspoken rules	5.356	0.079	1.060	1.124	2	7
Average	**5.453**	**0.077**	**1.027**	**1.055**	**2**	**7**
Service Orientation						
7. I try to figure out what a user's needs are	6.028	0.058	0.78	0.608	3	7
8. I offer the service that is best suited to the user's needs	6.078	0.046	0.62	0.385	3	7
9. I seek ways to increase users' satisfaction and loyalty	6.050	0.056	0.757	0.573	3	7
10. I gladly offer appropriate assistance	6.156	0.052	0.700	0.490	3	7
Average	**6.078**	**0.053**	**0.714**	**0.514**	**3**	**7**
Average Social Awareness Dimension	**5.795**	**0.061**	**0.825**	**0.698**	**2**	**7**

N = 180

1 =Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Somewhat Disagree; 4 = Not Sure; 5 = Somewhat Agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly Agree

The Social Awareness of this study comprised of three variables, namely empathy, organizational awareness and service orientation. Based on the response by 180 respondents, the three variables measures recorded mean scores of 5.856, 5.453 and 6.078, respectively. As shown in Figure 3, the mean score stood at 6.07 which is considered high implying that public librarians tended to agree with the service orientation competency. Service Orientation can be defined as the way one can anticipate, recognize, and meet the customer needs. The high score of this statement may contribute to the nature of the work of the librarians as they provide services to users; even the client charter in most of the public libraries explicitly mentions about service delivery to users.

The mean score for empathy by respondents is 5.856. Empathy is the ability to experience the same feelings or relating to others. The researcher presumes, however, that empathetic librarians are able to effectively

build and maintain relationships and fulfil the user needs, feeling a real sense of caring towards others while servicing the users. Hernon (2006) noted that, librarians are similar to other service oriented professions that require them to exercise empathy when delivering services to users.

According to Lugo (2007), the tendency to see the political relationships within the organization can be considered as the Organizational awareness competency. The Organisational awareness of Social Awareness recorded a mean value of 5.453 as illustrated in Figure 3. This finding is in line with Lisicki's (2011) study. Evidently, public librarians are conceivably inclined to agree that they understand and are able to interpret accurately the social forces that shape the views and actions of their users and others. Without doubt, public librarians know where the power centres are and respect staff of all grades as well as understanding the informal structure of their organization. They are really clear about their position, authority and to whom they should report to based on the desk file, which they received upon the first day they report for duty.

4.2.4   Relationship Management

The relationship management domain was measured using six main variables, namely Inspirational Leadership, Developing Others, Change Catalyst, Influence, Conflict Management and Teamwork and Collaboration as displayed in Figure 4. The descriptive profile of the teamwork and collaboration variable involves the creation of group synergy which fosters the ability to work with others in pursuing collective goals (Chemiss & Goleman, 2001). The mean score for this variable stood at 6.031. This figure reflects that librarians generally agreed that they are very group-orientated, enjoy teamwork and are inclined to cultivate a network of friends and colleagues to seek assistance from when help and advice are needed.

Inspirational Leadership refers to the ability to guide individuals and groups. The mean of this variable, which is one of the variables that reflects a high mean score of the EI at 5.734, generally inclined with the listed statement of the public librarian's inspirational leadership. The reason for the high score may be elucidated by the statistics that the respondents in this study consist of executive personnel from different departments of the organisation and leaders in the unit of library services; perhaps they possess higher educational qualifications with a degree in library science, thus they are experienced and have attended numerous comprehensive trainings such as leadership management, training of trainers, and many other courses.

With regards to the variables of conflict management, the mean scores stood at 5.380 and can also be considered as quite high. Conflict management is the ability to negotiate and resolve disagreements. Evidently, this denotes that public librarians are inclined to agree with the idea of handling difficult people in tense situations, with skills and tact.

In terms of Change Catalyst, public librarians are generally inclined to agree with the listed indicators. Therefore they are responsible for the training and development of their subordinates. With a mean score of 5.230, it suggests that the public librarians in this study agreed that they are able to recognise the need for change due to the variations of organisational policy and procedures. Thus, the findings of this study further support previous studies that denote that the Change Catalyst is important for librarians (eg. Myburgh, 2005; O'Connor and Li, 2008; and Quinn, 2005).

Out of the six variables within relationship management, the mean value of the Influence variable of Relationship Management stood at only 5.026. This variable scored the lowest mean. The possible explanation for the low score may be due to the librarians being preserved therefore they are not very skilful in influencing others. Nonetheless the value of 5.026 is still above the mid value of 4, hence suggesting that they are still considered skilful at persuasion by expressing ideas, convincing others and taking the challenge to make decisions or give opinions.

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Figure 4
Descriptive Profile Of Relationship Management

Items	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Dev.	Var.	Min	Max
			N = 180			
Transformational Leadership						
1. I acknowledge and reward people's strengths, accomplishments, and development	5.783	0.069	0.929	0.863	1	7
2. I offer useful feedback and identify people's needs for development	5.950	0.05	0.671	0.45	3	7
3. I mentor, give timely coaching, that grow a person's skill	5.567	0.071	0.952	0.906	2	7
4. I give direction to develop someone	5.578	0.07	0.933	0.871	2	7
5. I am articulate and able to arouse enthusiasm for a shared vision and mission	5.644	0.064	0.856	0.733	3	7
6. I step forward to lead as needed, regardless of position	5.744	0.067	0.904	0.817	3	7
7. I guide the performance of others while holding them accountable	5.794	0.061	0.824	0.678	3	7
8. I lead by example	5.812	0.062	0.835	0.697	3	7
Average	**5.734**	**0.064**	**0.863**	**0.752**	1	7
Change Catalyst						
9. I champion the change and enlist others in its pursuit	5.433	0.076	1.014	1.029	2	7
10. I model the change expected of others	5.028	0.081	1.09	1.189	2	7
Average	**5.2305**	**0.079**	**1.052**	**1.109**	**2**	**7**
Influence						
11. I am skilled at the art of persuasion	5.089	0.081	1.09	1.188	2	7
12. I convince by appealing to people's interest	5.183	0.078	1.044	1.089	2	7
13. I am able to use complex strategies like indirect influence to build consensus and support	4.806	0.084	1.124	1.264	1	7
Average	**5.026**	**0.081**	**1.086**	**1.180**	**1**	**7**
Conflict Management						
14. I spot potential conflict, bring disagreements into the open, and help de-escalate the conflict	5.417	0.071	0.956	0.915	3	7
15. I find common ideal to which all parties in a conflict can endorse	5.333	0.067	0.903	0.816	3	7
16. I orchestrate win-win solutions	5.389	0.068	0.918	0.842	3	7
Average	**5.380**	**0.069**	**0.926**	**0.858**	**3**	**7**
Teamwork and Collaboration						
17. I balance a focus on task with attention to relationships	5.894	0.054	0.728	0.531	3	7
18. I collaborate, sharing plans, information, and resources	6.056	0.049	0.658	0.433	3	7
19. I establish and maintain close relationship at work	6.094	0.054	0.73	0.533	3	7
20. I acknowledge the need for change and challenge the status quo	6.056	0.049	0.658	0.433	3	7
21. I spot and nurture opportunities for collaboration	6.056	0.059	0.796	0.634	3	7
Average	**6.031**	**0.053**	**0.714**	**0.513**	**3**	**7**
Communication						
22. I foster open communication and stay receptive to bad news as well as good	6.022	0.058	0.776	0.603	2	7
23. I listen well, seek mutual understanding, and fully welcome sharing of information	6.072	0.047	0.626	0.391	4	7
Average	**6.047**	**0.053**	**0.701**	**0.497**	**2**	**7**
Average Relationship Management Dimension	**5.574**	**0.065**	**0.870**	**0.778**	**1**	**7**

1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Somewhat Disagree; 4 = Not Sure; 5 = = Somewhat Agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly Agree

5.0   DISCUSSION

The statistics include mean, standard error, standard deviation and variance to identify the EI level of the librarians. These statistics facilitate the analysis of the normality of the four dimensions and 20 variables. When the researcher analyzed the mean, it can be said that public librarians are able to recognize that their feelings can affect performance and they know which emotions they are feeling. It is found that overall, the EI of Malaysian Public Librarians are high or above average. This indicates that public librarians have a good potential of competencies for self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. It is noted that the highest competency possessed by MPLs is the dimension of self-awareness. There is no doubt

that working in public libraries requires high self-awareness because of the diversity of requests from various community groups. The public librarians may be able to recognize their weaknesses and strong points.

The high level of accurate self-assessment may enable the public librarians to evaluate themselves as they actually are, and they are able to recognise their feelings each time as they always conduct annual assessment programmes (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threat analysis). The lowest competency of the self awareness domain is emotional self awareness. As a result, the librarians may be fairly intuitive and have the insights into their typical emotional responses to different situations, and the ways in which varying emotions affect their own behaviour and influence others around them. Since they are working in the public sector, they are perhaps required to be aware of the appropriate emotion when dealing with others. Different situations require them to exhibit different emotions to deliver high-quality services.

Additional to the self awareness dimension, the public librarians' self-confidence may be considered high too. Hence, they might be slightly more willing at times to make decisions, less likely to be perturbed by the possible adverse outcomes of any planned course of action. Their scores indicated that they are likely to have a very strong preference for detailed plans and schedules. As a result, they may be able to cope well with uncertainties. Consequently, they are likely to feel comfortable if required to make decisions independently. The exposure of training, working experience and knowledge may present MPLs more capability to do new tasks.

Self-management is the most important competency among the EI competencies and showed high mean score. It has been suggested that the index of self-management for the MPLs be increased. Evidently, public librarians in Malaysia are more adapted and are able to balance the various demands without losing focus or energy. Such librarians are flexible in adapting to new challenges, agile in adjusting to fluid changes, and flexible in their thinking in the face of new knowledge or realities. Furthermore, public librarians are most probably required to rotate and change their workplace. Thus, they are required to adapt themselves accordingly wherever they are required to serve, be it the cataloguing department, the circulation department, the IT department, or any other department.

In relation to transparency within the self management dimension, it is highly possible that public librarians really comply with the integrity concepts proposed by the government. In line with this, public librarians perhaps should acquire these skills as part of their work practices. The average mean value for optimism reveals that public librarians in Malaysia perhaps possess optimistic competencies that are well above the average. This high score may be due to the occurrences of optimistic approach by public librarians. They deal more positively with patrons, come up with solutions that are more creative for others' problems and are more able to link themselves proactively with the goals of the library. Additionally, optimism might enable librarians to deal well with difficulties or criticisms, see an obstacle as an opportunity rather than a threat in time of a setback.

The nature of the public librarians' work, require them to face people of various characters and with different needs. They have to endure and bear whatever problems in order to please and to serve people according to the objectives of the organisation or have good self-management. They are more likely to react instinctively in situations of stress, which may be due to a state of being too depressed, angry or frustrated when faced with rapidly changing situations or conflict in the workplace. Working in the public sector exposes librarians to social problems such as corruption, abuse of power and injustice. Thus, the integrity perhaps is one of the Self-Management competencies that is of profound concern.

Apart from that, if public librarians have low self-managing ability, they are likely to react to events; they will not be very proactive, and thus find themselves in a continuous mode of crisis. Public librarians who do not exercise self-management will fail to seize strategic opportunities, because they have not commenced the analysis or planned the process early enough. Furthermore, they have to adjust themselves to harmonise with changing situations, and to recognise efficiently the feelings and needs of others (Goleman, 1995). The findings are consistent with the studies of Goleman (1998) that individuals with high emotional self awareness possess excellent intrapersonal skills.

In relation to Social Awareness, public librarians with greater social awareness have been found to appreciate and recognise their own potential. They are aware of the organisation's work, able to identify their potential, value and calm others. It is possible for the librarians to appreciate other persons because they believe that the success of every job needs the support of others or through the mentoring of others. This finding is supported by the study by Cooper (1997), that individuals with high emotional skills have a strong personal relationship with the people around them. Working in the field of information services makes librarians always aware of their organisation, functions, mission, vision, organisational structure and their users. MPLs have always tried to provide the best service by trying to understand the users' needs and requirements.

The social awareness dimension used achievement orientation as one of the important competencies, and probably, this result is considered high too. In other words, achievement-driven public librarians possibly learn how to improve their performance by pursuing information to reduce uncertainty, find ways to do tasks better and are able to calculate risks. These efforts ensure their Key Performance Index (KPI) is met, and missions and goals are worthy and attainable as promoted by their top management. Emotional self-control shows almost similar results. This may be due to the complex nature of public librarians' work. They face different kinds of user groups, which make it tough for them to control their emotions when handling them in the library, nevertheless this provides them experience and maturity to handle that kind of users.

The average mean of service orientation of the social awareness competency stands out as the highest mean. Perhaps public librarians are ready to deliver any assistance to the users as stated in their client charter (Piagam Pelanggan). Moreover, being in the public service, public librarians attempt to foster an emotional climate where they are directly in touch with the users or others to keep the relationship with others on the right track.

Therefore, it is essential to carefully monitor the satisfaction of users or others to ensure they obtain what they need. The empathy competency perhaps helps librarians to read users accurately and enable them to attune to a wide range of emotional signals. They are able to sense the feelings and emotions in a person or a group from different backgrounds and build good relationships with users and employees. The researcher presumes, however, that empathetic librarians are resources to organizations, because they are able to effectively build and maintain relationships, which is a critical part in the operation of the information management industries as specific as libraries (Hernon, 2006).

Organizational awareness of the social awareness dimension records a mean value in line with Martinez's (2004) study. Evidently, public librarians are conceivably inclined to agree that they understand and are able to interpret accurately social forces that shape the views and actions of their users and others. Without a doubt, public librarians know where the power centres are and respect staff of all grades. They are really clear about their position, authority and to whom they should report to based on desk file (fail meja), which they receive upon the first day they report for duty.

The emotional intelligence competency with the highest mean is the Relationship Management variable. This may occur because public librarians participating in the survey are likely to build and link personal and emotional relationships. Thus, it is very difficult for them to identify the actual needs of users and to serve them in a better way. It is generally believed that working in the service industry involves implementation of sophisticated strategies in order to serve diverse populations (IFLA, 2004). Moreover, it can be implied that the jobs in public libraries always require good connection and relationship with both colleagues and users. Every librarian is expected to have good teamwork skills and to support one another through mentoring, advising, etc.

The descriptive profile of the teamwork and collaboration variable of the relationship management dimension involves creation of group synergy which fosters the ability to work with others in pursuing collective goals (Chemiss & Goleman, 2001). This finding is coherent with other variables; the mean score of this variable pertaining to social interdependence, which may refer to how librarians interact with others or work situations, including team environments as an integral part of organizational performance. Public librarians in this survey need to work in teams in doing library activities such as reading campaigns, Inter Library Loan, etc. Without a doubt, the communication competency is very important for public librarians. Possibly, librarians who possess this competency can effectively view from the perspectives and experiences of others, and empathetically understand them. They also understand the application of open questions to clarify individuals' requests, and actively search for constructive feedback of information (Sheih, 2010). Reference librarians, for example, need high-level communication skills when they deliver services to the users. Two-way communication makes these services active and interesting.

The transformational leadership competency is one of the competencies that is related to the relationship management dimension that shows a high mean value of EI. This finding is coherent with other variables whereby the highest mean score of these variables is for items pertaining to social skills. Transformational Leadership implies that librarians perceive their competency as good. The respondents of this study consist of executive personnel from different departments of the organisation who possess higher educational qualifications with a Degree in Library Science. They are experienced and have attended numerous comprehensive trainings such as leadership management, training of trainers, and many other courses. Therefore, these factors can transform public librarians and empower them to do their best in performing their responsibilities.

The competencies of conflict management and change catalyst as variables from relationship management can be considered quite high. Evidently, public librarians are inclined to agree sometimes with the idea of handling difficult people and tense situations, with skill and tact, while negotiating and resolving disagreements openly. In terms of change catalyst, public librarians are generally inclined and willing to be helped in becoming agents of change. Public librarians also may be able to recognize the need for change due to variations of organizational policy and procedures. However, their implementations of change are restricted by the top management, or fear to take risks and challenges and lack of confidence to champion the new order due to lack of experience.

The mean value of the influence competency of relationship management is considered the lowest among others. This condition can probably be explained by the fact that expressing ideas, convincing others and taking the challenge to make decisions or to give opinions can be complicated. The situation is especially hard when librarians are engaged in persuasive dialogue while addressing a different group of users. It is not an easy job for the young staff to convince senior officers and identifying suitable approaches to convince senior officers can be challenging tasks for any young staff.

6.0   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the level of EI among Malaysian Public Librarians (MPLs). The findings of this study, the level of EI among public librarians in Malaysia has proven to be reasonably high. However, several aspects of the EI still require improvements, which suggest that the authorities concerned should provide appropriate training to the librarians to improve the overall EI level. The contributions of this study can be used from several angles. Firstly, the instrument developed in the study can be applied to measure the EI level of librarians. The instrument can also be customized to be adopted by other professions which are service-oriented. Secondly, researchers who are interested in this topic can also use the instrument to study librarians or other service related professions in other settings. Similar to other studies, the conduct of this study is not without

limitation, which is related to the instruments used. The perceptual measures used in the study may not be assessed compared to the objective measure; therefore, future study should consider using an objective measure to produce more accurate variable results. The high level of EI among public librarians is useful for motivating library staff to provide high quality services, accurate information delivery systems and appropriate training programs, as envisioned by the Prime Minister of Malaysia.

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