



## THE LEVEL OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER IN SEBERANG PRAI TENGAH, PENANG

Mohd Zuri Ghani & Wan Sharipahmira Mohd Zain  
School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang

### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the level of EQ (Emotional Quotient) among special education teachers in Seberang Perai Tengah, Penang. This research tried to see whether gender, age, level of education and teaching experience contributed to level of EQ among special education teachers. 141 teachers who are currently teaching in the integrated program in primary and secondary schools have been selected as samples in this research. The instrument has been developed by researchers base on other previous EQ instruments. Descriptive statistic was used to show the frequency and percentage, meanwhile t-test and ANOVA were used to see the significant of the variables tested. Findings showed that the EQ among special education teachers was very high (97.9%) and 2.1% was at average level. However, findings showed that, there were significant differences in EQ among the respondent base on gender but the other variables did not show any significant differences.

**Keywords:** Level of EQ, Special Education Teachers.

### Introduction

Emotional intelligence is highly desirable, especially in the workplace because of the way in the selection of employees has changed. It does not depend on academic ability, but more importantly the individuals who wish to apply for the job should have a high emotional intelligence. Goleman (1995), stated that individuals with high emotional intelligence able to do a job successfully, have the ability to manage their own emotions and other people as well as highly motivated to succeed (Goleman 1995). According to Goleman (1995) Emotional intelligence is a concept that is very relevant especially to the efforts of an organization to develop and expand the potential of human resources. This is because the principles of emotional intelligence can help the organization to develop methods to understand and evaluate the behavior and management styles, attitudes, interpersonal skills which is available form the latent potential in a person. Emotional intelligence should also be taken into consideration when an organization begin to think of human resource planning, building employee profile, manage the human resources development and determine the appropriate individuals to provide the best services for the customers of the organization.

In the education sector, the effectiveness of an educational program depends on the level of competence and dedication of its professional staff. Teachers who are assigned to teach should have a high level of emotional intelligence so they can provide effective impact on their students. A high level of people emotional intelligence is the more emotionally stable and they able to manage his emotions very well, especially the negatively in nature (John, Robins & Pervin, 2008). A high level of emotional intelligence found to be more happy and satisfied with life and very concerned about the well being of the world. According to the Five Factor Model of personality theory which is presented in Patrick and Susan (1995), the high level of intelligence emotions people shows there is low neuroticism factor such as calmness, less emotional, able to control themselves, caring for the well-being and strong (hardy). According to another theory, people with high level of intelligence emotions is a person who can control and manage their emotions very well and in turn can carry out their duties effectively and succeed in the job and career (John, Robins & Pervin, 2008).

### Background of Study

Emotional intelligence become one of an important determinants for measuring success in one's life. Emotional intelligence involves the quality of an individual's ability to identify and understand their own emotions and others, manage conflict and flexible in positive interactions with the environment in verbal and non-verbal. An earlier study by Noriah, Siti Rahayah, Zuria, Saemah, Manisah and Rosadah (2000) was able to demonstrate that emotional intelligence has a positive relationship with one's cognitive abilities and competence on completion of certain tasks.

Studies conducted by Noriah Mohd Ishak and Siti Rahayah Ariffin (2005) and Farah AMira (2004) for first year students have found that emotional intelligence is strongly influenced by demographic factors such as gender, teaching experience and level of education on the job performance. The study has found that there are significant differences in EQ Index for males and females students.

For the special education, the foundation of success on a special education program is a factor in the efficiency and dedication among its professional staff (Chua, 1976). Teachers who teach students with special needs require a specialized training in order to understand the individual needs of special students. Furthermore, special education teachers in Malaysia are trained at several universities and educational institutions. The question is until what extent the training curriculum for special education teacher able to focus on emotional intelligence among trainee teachers of special education program. Is there enough time allocated for the training of trainee teachers or even in-service teachers in terms of improving emotional intelligence among them. Also on the gender, age and experience may influence the emotional of special education teachers?.

Atkins and Stough (2005), in their study used two types of measuring tools to measure the level of emotional intelligence among teachers. Their study has found that there was a weak correlation between age and emotional intelligence among teachers. Gender differences were found for most of the studies included Van Rooy, Alonso and Viswesvaran (2005), and Atkins and Stough (2005) states that the female teacher recorded higher emotional intelligence than male teachers. Meanwhile, according to Gibbs, (2002); Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy & Hoy, (1998), working experience and status within the organization such as department heads, assistant principals, senior teachers, regular teachers or probation teachers did not have any obvious connection with emotional intelligence.

## Research Objectives

The objective of this study was to investigate the level of emotional intelligence among special education teachers. This study attempted to find out:

- i. Is gender affecting the level of emotional intelligence of a special education teacher?
- ii. Is the age of teacher can influence the level of emotional intelligence of special education teachers.
- iii. Is the level of education can influence a person's level of emotional intelligence of special education teachers.
- iv. Is the work experience can influence a person's level of emotional intelligence of special education teachers.

## Research Questions

Based on the research objectives listed, the following questions will be explored on:

- i. Is there a different level of emotional intelligence significantly among special education teachers based on gender?
- ii. Is there a different level of emotional intelligence significantly among special education teachers based on age?
- iii. Is there a different levels of emotional intelligence significantly among special education teachers based on education level and the course been enroll.
- iv. Is there a different level of emotional intelligence significantly among special education teachers based on length of work experience?

## Research Hypothesis

The hypothetical level of emotional intelligence among special education teachers in the Seberang Perai of surveyed in this study is the null hypothesis for these hypotheses which do not determine the direction of the expected relationship:

- HO1: No significant differences in emotional intelligence among special education teachers based on gender.  
 HO2: No significant differences in emotional intelligence among special education teachers based on age.  
 HO3: No significant differences in emotional intelligence among special education teachers based on education level.  
 HO4: No significant differences in emotional intelligence among special education teachers based on the job experience.

## Methodology

This research is a survey studies to identify the level of emotional intelligence of special education teachers based on several independent variables of gender, age, education level and length of teaching experience. Data will then be discussed in descriptive and inferential. Percentage and frequency were used to present data on the background of the sample. Then t test and ANOVA were used to see the significance of emotional intelligence variables. The study was carried out in all primary and secondary schools in the Seberang Perai Tengah with a special education program integration. All of special education teachers from each school were selected as sample for the study. A total of five secondary schools and 10 primary schools have special education stream was involved in the study. Overall sample for this study was a total of 141 people. Respondents were special education teachers from different backgrounds in terms of gender, age, education level and length of teaching on special education stream.

## Research Instruments

The instrument was used in this study was adapted from the Emotional Quotient Inventory developed by Reuven Bar-On (1997). To test the validity and reliability of the instrument constructed, the researcher has conducted a pilot study. A pilot study has found that instrument built in has a high reliability with an alpha value of 0.810.

## Findings

### Findings 1: The level of emotional intelligence by gender

HO1: There is no difference in the level of emotional intelligence significantly among special education teachers based on gender.

Table 1: Results of the t test for emotional intelligence by gender

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	df	Significant -2 end
Male	28	4.41	.3250	2.637	139	0.009
Female	113	4.22	.3309	2.666	41.985	

P<0.05

To test this hypothesis, the independent t test is used. The Levene's test for determining the equivalence of variance found  $F = .339$  and  $p = .562$ , then the variance of the two samples are equivalent. Then independent t test assuming the equal variance was used to test the level of emotional intelligence between male and female teachers on special

education. Mean scores of emotional intelligence level also shows that male teachers (4.41) score higher levels of emotional intelligence than women (4.22). Mean score differences between males and females only 0.19. The null hypothesis is rejected then this study has meant that there is no significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence among special education teachers, male and female. So these findings imply that gender had any influence on the level of emotional intelligence of a special education teacher.

**Findings 2: The level of emotional intelligence based on age**

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence among special education teachers based on age.

**Table 2:** Comparison of Mean Scores Level on Emotional Intelligence Based on Age

Age	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Less than 25 years	4	4.2850	.41549
25 -35 years	97	4.2355	.34192
36 - 45 years	24	4.3700	.33435
46 – 55 years	15	4.2693	.28912
55 years and above	1	4.0600	-
Total	141	4.2621	.33674

Results on Table 2 shows that teachers from the age group of 36 to 45 found a mean score of emotional intelligence level is higher (4.37) compared with teachers in other age levels, followed by the group aged less than 25 years (4:28) and the next group aged 45 to 55 years (4.26). The mean scores for the group aged 25 to 35 is 4:23.

**Table 3:** One-way ANOVA Mean Scores Test on Emotional Intelligence Levels Based on Age

Resources	Total (Square)	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Among Groups	.392	4	.098	.861	.489
In Groups	15.483	136	.114		
Total	15.875	140			

P<0.05

To test this hypothesis, one way analysis of variance test used. ANOVA results showed that there was no significant difference between the level of emotional intelligence among samples based on age ( $F(4,136) = .861, p = 0.489$ ). Then the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and the study meant that no significant differences exist in the level of emotional intelligence based on age.

**Findings 3: Level of Emotional Intelligence Based on Qualifications**

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence among special education teachers based on education level.

**Table 4:** Comparison of Mean Score Level Pursuant To Emotional Intelligence of Professionalism

Level Of Qualification	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Special Education Certification	4	4.65	.4591
Basic Teaching Certificate	18	4.22	.2955
Diploma	57	4.25	.3128
Bachelor Degree	52	4.22	.3496
Master	2	4.33	.6364
14 Weeks Course	4	4.31	.2199
Other courses	4	4.64	.2270
Total	141	4.26	.3367

Results showed that the mean level of emotional intelligence scores of teachers who had obtained a special teaching certificate (4.65) is higher than teachers from other qualifications. Meanwhile, teachers with special courses (4.64) related to special education have a mean score of emotional intelligence which the second highest.

**Table 5:** One-way ANOVA Mean Score on The Level of Emotional Intelligence Bsd on Qualification

Resource	Total Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Among Groups	1.328	6	.221	2.039	0.065
In Groups	14.547	134	.109		
Total	15.875	140			

P<0.05

Based on the above table showed no significant difference between the level of emotional intelligence with the approval of ( $F(6,134) = 2.039, p = 0.065$ ). Then as age, qualification also unable to reject the null hypothesis of the study. This indicates that there is no significant difference on the level of emotional intelligence based on educational qualification.

**Findings 4: Level of Emotional Intelligence Based on Experience**

Ho4: There is no significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence among special education teachers on the job experience.

**Table 6:** Comparison of Mean Scores Emotional Intelligence Levels Based on Duration of Experience

Level of Experiences	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Less 5 years	95	4.22	.33727
6 – 10 years	26	4.35	.32407
11 – 15 years	11	4.37	.38371
16 – 20 years	5	4.36	.29038
20 years above	4	4.05	.11358
Total	141	4.26	.33674

The results of the above table show that the mean score for teachers serving between 11-15 years (4.37) is the highest compared to other groups. This was followed with an experienced group of 16-20 years (4.36). The lowest mean score (4:05) obtained for the group experience at level 20 and above.

**Table 7:** One-way ANOVA test Emotional Intelligence Levels Mean Score Based on Experience

Resource	Total Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Among Group	.708	4	.177	1.588	.181
In Group	15.167	136	.112		
Total	15.875	140			

P<0.05

Based on the results of Table 7 showed no significant difference between the level of emotional intelligence based on experience ( $F(4,136) = 1.588$ ),  $p = 0.181$ . Therefore, these factors mean that the experience was also unable to reject the null hypothesis of the study. This finding implies that as age and qualifications, the factor of experience does not influence the level of emotional intelligence among special education teachers.

## Discussions

Findings indicated that emotional intelligence on male teachers varies significantly with female teacher. The men special education teachers have more emotional intelligence than the female. This statement is contrary to the findings of previous researchers (Noriah, Siti Rahayah, Zuria, Saemah, Manisah & Rasadah 2000), who found that women are more emotionally stable than men. However, age, level of academic qualifications and teaching experiences do not show a significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence. Therefore, this study has shown that age, level of academic qualification and teaching experience did not influence the emotions of a teacher. This means either the early age of 25 years or when about to retire age, special education teachers do not show differences in the level of emotional intelligence significantly. However, special education teachers, aged 36-45 years had a higher average (4.37) than any other age group for emotional intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence has proven its importance should be taken into consideration when an organization such as a working organization that educate children with special needs to think about human resource planning, building employee profile, manage human resources development and determine the appropriate individuals to provide the best service for the customer organization that is students with special needs. Therefore, special education teachers who teach children with special needs should have a high emotional intelligence to ensure they get a better service and effectively to their students.

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