

**THE EFFECT OF INDIVIDUAL EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON TEAM
PERFORMANCE AMONG NURSRES**

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The Faculty of Management
University Technology Malaysia

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A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the
requirement for the award of the Degree
of Master of Science (Human Resource Management)

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To my loved grandparents and parents

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ABSTRACT

This study is conducted to analyze the effect of individual emotional intelligence (EI) on team performance among nurses. Individual emotional intelligence (EI) is viewed as the independent variable consisting of optimism/mood regulation, appraisal of emotions, social skills and utilization of emotions. Nursing team performance is view as the dependent variable. A survey using questionnaire was carried out to 260 respondents in Handan First Hospital, Hebei Province, China. Descriptive analysis was used to identify the level of individual emotional intelligence (EI) and nursing team performance. Furthermore, correlation test using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) has been performed in order to identify the relationship between independent and dependant variables. The findings show that there is a significant positive relationship between individual emotional intelligence (EI) and nursing team performance. Finally, multiple regression analysis identifies the strength of the relationship. Results indicate that utilization of emotions has the most strongly contribute to nursing team performance.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini dijalankan untuk menganalisis kesan kecerdasan emosi individu (EI) mengenai prestasi pasukan di kalangan jururawat. Kecerdasan emosi individu (EI) dilihat sebagai pembolehubah bebas yang terdiri daripada peraturan mood/yang optimum, penilaian emosi, kemahiran sosial dan penggunaan emosi. Manakala prestasi pasukan kejururawatan adalah sebagai pembolehubah bersandar. Satu tinjauan yang menggunakan soal selidik telah dijalankan kepada 260 responden di Handan Pertama Hospital, Hebei, China. Hasil daripada tinjauan yang dijalankan, analisis deskriptif telah digunakan untuk mengenal pasti tahap kecerdasan emosi individu (EI) dan prestasi pasukan kejururawatan. Tambahan pula, ujian korelasi menggunakan Pekali Korelasi Pearson (r) telah dilaksanakan untuk mengenal pasti hubungan antara pembolehubah bebas dan pembolehubah bersandar. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa terdapat hubungan positif yang signifikan antara kecerdasan individu emosi (EI) dan kejururawatan prestasi pasukan. Akhirnya, analisis regresi berganda digunakan untuk mengenal pasti kekuatan hubungan antara pembolehubah. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa penggunaan emosi mempunyai pengaruh paling kuat kepada prestasi pasukan kejururawatan.

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LIST OF SMYBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EI	- Emotional Intelligence
IEI	- Individual Emotional Intelligence
OMR	- Optimism/Mood Regulation
AoE	- Appraisal of Emotions
SS	- Social Skills
UoE	- Utilization of Emotions
NTP	- Nursing Team Performance

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Nowadays, working in teams is increasing in many organizations or companies (Piña *et al.*, 2008). Under the global and rapidly developing economy, a fundamental aspect of an organization success is the use of teams (Mathieu *et al.*, 2006). Team work is an effective management skill in organizations (Wellinset *et al.*, 1994 in Chou *et al.*, 2006).

According to the literature on teams, the concept of team performance is the outcome of working in teams (Salas *et al.*, 2008). Levine *et al.* (1990) pointed out that team performance more or less depends on the abilities of team members; and the behaviors of team leaders. This includes leadership style, interpersonal relationships among team members, and the level of interaction between each of the team members as influences on team performance (Krech *et al.*, 1962 in Higgs *et al.*, 2005).

Within organizations or companies, teams are constituted by human beings who are emotional creatures (Peslak, 2005). People undergo a wide range of changes in their emotions. For example, people can change from anger to

enthusiasm, worry to calm, and sad to happy based on what they experience or what they see and hear (Goleman, 1995 in Peslak, 2005).

Many scholars have found the role of emotions as a critical determinant of work behaviour, interpersonal exchanges and performance in organizations (Brief *et al.*, 2002 in Chang *et al.*, 2012). In 1995, Brown suggested emotions must be dealt with in the workplace (Peslak 2005). Negative emotions such as frustration, irritation and anger are dysfunctional for team performance (Glinow *et al.*, 2004 in Peslak, 2005). During team working, negative emotions reduce zeal and therefore it will reduce team performance (McCull-Kennedy *et al.*, 2002 in Peslak, 2005). Positive emotions will increase team performance. For example trust is one kind of positive emotion which has an effect on teams about organizations. Trust can increase the communication with others and provide greater job satisfaction or a greater team performance (Langfred, 2004). Therefore, a clear understanding and good control of emotions are important for good decision making, clear thinking and performing at an optimal level. The human abilities either to use the positive emotions, or control the negative emotions are very interesting.

A general mental ability of humans is Emotional Intelligence (EI). EI has become a major topic of interest in scientific circles (Bar-On, 2006). EI is an emotion-related cognitive ability which involves perceiving, using, understanding and regulating emotions (Mayer *et al.*, 1997; Mayer *et al.*, 2004 in Qualter *et al.*, 2012). People who have a high level of EI are expected to get higher achievements in both of the workplace and their personal life, and also contribute significantly to the performance of their organization (Carmeli *et al.*, 2006).

A significant relationship between individual EI and team performance was pointed out by Bar-On (2006) who stated that individual EI has many functions in teams within organizations. Such as, the ability to understand and accept oneself;

the ability to understand other colleagues feelings and needs; the ability to manage emotions; the ability to be realistic and put things in correct perspective; and the ability to make positive decisions. In teams, a high level of individual EI gave positive influence to team performance.

Individual EI has been claimed to validly predict a variety of successful behaviours at work, at a level exceeding of intelligence (Cooper *et al.*, 1997; Goleman, 1998; Hay Group, 2000; Weisinger, 1998 in Quoidbach *et al.*, 2009). Nowadays, the use of individual EI for the purpose of career selection and job orientation has become a common practice in a great number of organizations, and according to a recent survey of benchmark practices in the United States, 80 % of the major corporations are now trying to promote individual EI in their organization (Zeidner *et al.*, 2004).

In United States, EI is popular used in organizations. However, with 1.3 billion people living in a land area of around 10 million square kilometres, China is the worlds' most populated country. There are now over 1.2 million Chinese nurses, with around 98.6 nurses per 100,000 populations. In line with this enthusiasm, studies investigated individual EI in the nursing context are currently a topic of keen interest (Gerits *et al.*, 2005; Kooker, *et al.*, 2007; Landa *et al.*, in press; Mcqueen, 2004; Montes-Berges *et al.*, 2007 in Quoidbach *et al.*, 2009). Following this, the present research will examine how individual EI impacts on nursing team performance.

1.2 Background of the Study

EI is an emerging concept that is fascinating in the academic, business, and healthcare worlds. While its appeal most seems intuitive, the individuals have only begun to appreciate the relevance of this concept in understanding, the very nature of relationships and the effectiveness in working with others. Emotions are important as it provides meaningful information, which in turn can change attention and thought, change our physical feelings, and motivating behaviour (Bechara, 2004; Caruso *et al.*, 2004; Clore *et al.*, 2007). Emotions influence what people think about, how people think, and are essential for people to make appropriate decisions, take the best possible action to solve problems, cope with change, and to be successful (Caruso *et al.*, 2004). Some individuals have argued that when making decisions and taking actions, emotions are just as important as rational, intellectual thought (Appelbaum, 1998; Cadman *et al.*, 200 in Beauvais *et al.*, 2010). In a profession where nurses can be faced with life-and-death decisions, all data, including data obtained from emotions, can be considered as critical (Benner *et al.*, 1996 in Beauvais *et al.*, 2010). Improved decision making and problem solving is one reason that emotional intelligence has been identified as a characteristic of effective nursing performance (McQueen, 2004; Moyer *et al.*, 2008 in Beauvais *et al.*, 2010).

In China, nurses have a large population of 1.2 million. In addition, the number of Chinese nurses is increasing every year. In 1930, the first government-funded nursing school was established in China, and this number has gradually increased. By the year 2000, there were 530 such institutes, covering the vast majority of China. At present time, around 95 % of all Chinese nurses are trained for three years at a health school after nine years of primary and secondary schooling. These schools graduate about 40,000 nurses per year. A higher level university diploma in nursing was re-introduced in the 1980s, of which there are now

99 programmes (Hong *et al.*, 2003). The highest level of qualification, is the university bachelor degree in nursing, it's often viewed as elite because it takes five years of full-time study and only graduates about 300 nurses per year (Chan *et al.*, 1999).

In view of the large population of Chinese nurses and the increase in the number of nursing students in China, let them to know their own EI and how EI works to them are necessary. According to the nursing work, it is also necessary to determine how individual EI contributes to nursing team performance.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

As the complexity of the workplace continues to grow, organizations increasingly depend on teams (Salas *et al.*, 2008). Teams are widely used in organizations, such as when errors have led to severe consequences; when the task complexity exceeds the capacity of an individual; when the task environment is ill-defined, ambiguous, and stressful; when multiple and quick decisions are needed; and when the lives of others depend on the collective insight of individual members (Salas *et al.*, 2008).

People work in teams to seek the best combination of individuals for the team in terms of the mixed knowledge, skills, abilities, and other factors (Mohammed *et al.*, 2002). However not everyone can work with others effectively even though they are part of a team (Salas *et al.*, 2008). Some people probably do not know how to work with others or how to get along with others. Such people do not know how to share cognition, how to feel the emotions or others, how to understand or let other team members understand one's self, how to communicate effectively or how to

make good relationships with other team members. Therefore, these people will negatively influence teamwork, which is nested in team performance (Salas *et al.*, 2008). People who are work in teams, are necessary to seriously thinking about how to get together and work well with others.

In these years, many scholars found that the role of emotion as a critical determinant of work behavior, interpersonal exchange, and performance in organizations (Brief & Weiss, 2002). Context to the nursing teams, the main issues in this study could be posed as to enhancing emotional intelligence skills may help the nurses cope with the emotional demands of the healthcare environment which can be stressful, exhausting and can potentially lead to burnout (McQueen, 2004; Moyer *et al.*, 2008). For examples, in a nursing team, when the team members have different opinions, EI is useful for the team members to recognize their own thoughts and the feelings of others to giving an appropriate response (Chang *et al.*, 2012). Also an individual with a high EI is very good at reading and understand emotions, behaviours and the cognition of others (Elfenbein *et al.*, 2007). Nurses have to be sensitive to the emotions of patients, to aid the assessment of patients and identify their needs in order to allow the nurses to do their work effectively (Beauvais *et al.*, 2010). Emotions are essential to create and maintaining a caring environment (Smith, 2005). The ability of a nurse to establish a rapport with patients is to manage their own emotions, and empathize with patients and is essential to provide quality care (Evans *et al.*, 2002).

Team performance is affected by each individual within the team. Different individual team member has different level of EI, according to the widely uses and the influences of EI to teams, it is important to team members understand EI. Therefore the question of how individual EI affects team performance would be the subject of the study. This present study will be conducted in Handan First Hospital in Handan city, Hebei province of China. Despite the great importance of team

working, the need for individual EI has been made clear to enhance the field of teams. The question can be posed as to the importance of individual EI to a nursing team.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the statement of the problem, several research questions are developed:

1. What is the level of individual EI (optimism/mood regulation; appraisal of emotions; social skills and utilization of emotions) among nurses in Handan First Hospital?
2. What is the level of nursing team performance in Handan First Hospital?
3. Which of the EI factors (optimism/mood regulation; appraisal of emotions; social skills and utilization of emotions) most strongly contribute to nursing team performance in Handan First Hospital?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study seeks to identify how individual EI can contribute to nursing team performance. Several separate objectives of this study are developed:

1. To measure the level of individual EI (optimism/mood regulation; appraisal of emotions; social skills and utilization of emotions) among nurses in Handan First Hospital.
2. To measure the level of nursing team performance in Handan First Hospital.
3. To identify which of the EI factors (optimism/mood regulation; appraisal of emotions; social skills and utilization of emotions) most strongly contribute to nursing team performance in Handan First Hospital.

1.6 Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study, is to examine the individual EI (optimism/mood regulation; appraisal of emotions; social skills and utilization of emotions) contribute to team performance among nurses in a public hospital in Handan city, Hebei province of China.

1.7 Hypotheses

This dissertation aims to study the individual EI sub-factors that contribute to nursing team performance. Based on the discussion above, it addresses the following hypotheses:

H1: A high level of individual EI has significantly direct positive effect on nursing team performance.

H1 a: The increase in optimism/mood regulation will result in better nursing team performance.

H1 b: The increase in appraisal of emotions will result in better nursing team performance.

H1 c: The increase in social skills will result in better nursing team performance.

H1 d: The increase in utilization of emotions will result in better nursing team performance.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study is conducted in Handan First Hospital, in Handan city of Hebei province in China. The study focuses on how individual EI (optimism/mood regulation; appraisal of emotions; social skills and utilization of emotions) contribute to nursing team performance. The team performance in this study will adopt the “taskwork and teamwork mental models” developed by (Mathieu *et al.*, 2000). The individual EI in this study will be based on the ability EI and trait EI models. Combining these models, four sub-factors namely optimism/mood regulation, appraisal of emotions, social skills and utilization of emotions will be chosen for the research.

This study emphasizes the influence between nursing team performance and individual EI. The individual EI made up of the four sub-factors, (optimism/mood

regulation; appraisal of emotions; social skills and utilization of emotions) where they are the independent variable and nursing team performance is the dependent variable.

1.9 Significance of the Study

The researcher believes the outcome of this study could indirectly be used by Chinese nurses and nursing students in China, to better understand and improve their teamwork. Several opinions are addressed:

EI is a human ability belonging with people, when the people were born. EI is the ability to manage an individual's own emotions and understand the emotions of others. And also if someone is sensitive to the feelings of others, responsive and can effectively communicate with others in which they need a high EI in support (Mayer *et al.*, 2008). An individual with a high EI is very good at reading and understand emotions, behaviours and the cognition of others (Elfenbein *et al.*, 2007). Team members with a high EI makes the teamwork more positive, helpful and cooperative (George *et al.*, 1990 in Goleman 1998) which can therefore improve team performance. Depends on the different knowledge level of EI, people have different understanding about either how EI works to them, or how to use EI. This study will not only help the respondents have clear understanding of EI in daily life, but also will help the respondents to know how to use EI during work.

However, based on the result of the research this study will help the respondents know the level of their EI and the level of team performance. At last, the study will provide how individual EI contribute to team performance among respondents.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

There are several constraints that may be encountered during the study. They are as follows:

1. The study result is only true for nurses as it is carried out in a public hospital. It would be difficult to explain how individual EI can contribute to team performance for the whole business field based on this work.
2. Due to the large number of nurses in Handan city, Hebei province of China, this study will only investigate a sample of nurses in Handan First Hospital. The data collected will not reflect the situation of the whole nurses in Handan city, Hebei province of China.
3. This study is only concerned with how individual EI affects nursing team performance. It would not be sufficient to explain how nursing team performance is affected by other EI ranges.
4. This study took place over several weeks. It would require much more time for the result to be more comprehensive.
5. There are many team mental models available for team performance. However, this study only focuses on “taskwork and teamwork mental models”

1.11 The Conceptual Definition

The conceptual definition is very important to define the detail constructs of the research topics that will be carried out by the researcher. Several important concepts are defined:

1.11.1 Team

The team is a social entity that is composed of members with a high task interdependency with shared and valued common goals (Dyer, 1984). A team is a combination of two or more individuals. These individuals work together in order to achieve the same common and valued objective. In a team, individuals are interdependent, interact and dynamic with each other. Each individual is assigned specific functions to perform, and is also confined to the life-span of a membership (William *et al.*, 1992).

A work team is a group of members with interdependent interactions and mutually shared responsibility for achieving specified outcomes (Cohen *et al.*, 1997).

1.11.2 Team Member

A team member is a person who contributes to the efforts, which contribute towards team performance (Steiner, 1972 in Chang *et al.*, 2012).

1.11.3 Team Work

Teamwork is defined as the interdependent components of performance required to effectively coordinate the performance of multiple individuals (Salas *et al.*, 2008).

1.11.4 Team Performance

Team performance is conceptualized as a multilevel process (and not a product) arising as team members engage in managing their individual and team-level taskwork and teamwork processes (Klein *et al.*, 2000). Team performance is the perception of how the team members assess the quality of the team's service, the productivity of the team, the team effectiveness, and finally, the level of the team's assistance in achieving the mission of the organization (Yang *et al.*, 2009).

1.11.5 Nurse

Nurses may be differentiated from other health care providers by their approach to patient care, training, and scope of practice. Nurses perform their duties in a wide diversity of practice areas with a different scope of practice, and level of prescriber authority in each. Many nurses provide care within the ordering scope of physicians, and this traditional role has come into shape to the historic public image of nurses as care providers. However, nurses are permitted by most jurisdictions to practice independently in a variety of settings depending on training level. In the post-war period, nursing education has undergone a process of

diversification towards advanced and specialized credentials, and many of the traditional regulations and provider roles are changing.

1.11.6 Nursing

Although nursing practice varies both through its various specialties and in different countries, the nursing organizations were listed below the offer the following definitions:

1. **International Council of Nurses:** nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of all ages' individuals, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all health. Nursing includes the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled and dying people. Advocacy, promotion of a safe environment, research, participation in shaping health policy and in patient and health systems management, and education are also the key for nursing roles.
2. **Virginia Avenel Henderson:** the unique function of the nurse is to assist the individual, sick or well, in the performance of those activities contributing to health or its recovery (or to peaceful death) that he would perform unaided if he had the necessary strength, or knowledge.
3. **American Nurses Association:** nursing is the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and abilities; prevention of illness and injury; alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human responses; and advocacy in health care for individuals, families, communities, and populations.

1.11.7 Emotion

Even though there is no consensus in the literature on a definition of emotion, the term is taken for granted itself and, most often, emotion is defined with the reference to a list such as, anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, and surprise (Cabanac, 2002).

Emotion is obviously a central to human existence. Emotion lies at the root of societal behaviour, civilization, and the moral systems of humans. Emotion is the way in which humans conceptualize and understand the world around them (AK, 2006). As such, emotions have both positive and negative affects on humans as mentioned by scholars over many years. In the early to mid-twentieth century, emotions were treated as negative. Emotions were to be controlled by the individual although the individual would succumb to the influence of emotions (Young, 1936; Schaffer *et al.*, 1940 cited in Stubbs, 2005). Years later the positive aspects of emotions were mentioned such as helping humans to prioritize tasks, focus, organize, and motivate a person (Leeper, 1948; Mandler, 1975; Simon, 1982; Izard *et al.*, 1980; Plutchik, 1980; Tomkins, 1962; Izard, 1991 in Stubbs, 2005).

1.11.8 Emotional Intelligence

In 1995, the major topic of discussion in scientific circles was “emotional intelligence” (EI). A publication which was written by Goleman named “*Emotional intelligence: why it can matter more than IQ*” was the bestseller in the same year. Goleman is the progenitor of the EI construct. In his book, EI refers to the ability of humans to recognize their own feelings and the feelings of others. These feelings guide the thinking and behaviour of humans (Goleman 2001).

EI is the ability to understand and make optimum use of emotions in daily life (Mayer *et al.*, 1997 in Mueller *et al.*, 2006). As a human being, a person could use EI to solve problems and regulate behaviours. EI provides the ability to help people to recognize and understand themselves and others (Mayer *et al.*, 1997; Salovey *et al.*, 1990 in Mueller *et al.*, 2006).

In the early years, the definition of EI evolved to mean both intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence among humans. The ability to understand one's own emotions is intrapersonal intelligence. The ability to understand the emotions of others and their purposes is interpersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1983 in Schutte *et al.*, 1998).

EI is an emotion-related cognitive ability which involves perceiving, using, understanding and regulating emotions (Mayer *et al.*, 1997; Mayer *et al.*, 2004 in Qualter *et al.*, 2011). The self-perceptions of personality hierarchies can be related to emotion. This personality hierarchy is an EI (Petrides, Furnham *et al.*, 2007; Petrides, Pita *et al.*, 2007 cited in Qualter *et al.*, 2011).

1.12 Operational Definition

An operational definition is to explain the actual implementation of a project. For this study, the operational definition of EI can be illustrated by actual conditions. The following are some of the operational definitions:

1.12.1 Team Performance

According to the literature, the operational definition of team performance in this study refers to the outcomes from team members during their team work. In this study, team performance would be defined from how team members work together, how the interactions between team members or how the interpersonal relationship among team members.

1.12.2 Emotional Intelligence

The mental processes which are involved in the recognition, use, understanding and management of one's own and the emotional states of others to solve problems and regulate behaviours referred to as EI (Mayer *et al.*, 1997; Salovey *et al.*, 1990 in Brackett *et al.*, 2006). EI demonstrates multiple perspectives (Zeidner *et al.*, 2008 in Chang *et al.*, 2012).

In this study, the four sub-factors are optimism/mood regulation, appraisal of emotions, social skills and utilization of emotions which relate to an overall EI factor (Petrides *et al.*, 2000; Saklofske *et al.*, 2003 in Austin *et al.*, 2004).

1.12.2.1 Optimism/Mood Regulation

The mood regulation hypothesis offers an alternative framework for understanding the effects of mood (Manucia *et al.*, 1984; Isen, 1987). According to this hypothesis, people regulate their feelings by generating thoughts and taking

actions that maximize their hedonic state. Thus, a positive affective state is posited to generate attempts to maintain and protect that state, which typically entails behaving and thinking in a positive way. In situations involving negative effects, the mood regulation hypothesis states that people will try to improve their mood (Manucia *et al.*, 1984; Isen, 1987).

1.12.2.2 Appraisal of Emotion

Appraisal of emotion is a mental evaluation of emotions. This evaluation is defined as the feelings a person experiences after a specific event in terms of six cognitive dimensions; situational state, motivational state, power, probability, legitimacy, and agency (Alkan, 2004).

1.12.2.3 Social Skill

Social Skills are associated with the ability of a person to deal with problems without demeaning those who work with him or her, to not allow one's own or the negative feelings of others to inhibit collaboration, and to handle affective conflict with tact and diplomacy (Polychroniou, 2009).

1.12.2.4 Utilization of Emotion

Utilization of emotion means that individuals harness their own emotions in order to solve problems. Utilization of emotions can be expressed in many ways

including flexible planning, creative thinking or motivate emotion (Salovey *et al.*, 1990). In this study EI items will be chosen from “the short 33-item self-report Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS)” as developed by Schutte *et al.* in 1998. In this aspect the respondents will personally reported their EI. Every individual team member will be included in the response.

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