

An investigation of emotional intelligence and counselling self-efficacy among counsellors-in-training

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ABSTRACT

The challenges faced by the counsellors-in-training are enormous. Therefore, investigating emotional quotient (EQ) and counselling self-efficacy among counsellors-in-training is crucial. This study aimed to examine the EQ and counselling self-efficacy levels among counsellors-in-training and investigate the relationships between these variables. A total of 373 counselling students from three universities in the Northern Peninsular of Malaysia have participated in this study. This study involved a quantitative method using survey as a data collection technique and also employed a convenience sampling procedure. There were two questionnaires used in this study, namely Bar-On emotional quotient inventory (EQ-i) and counselling self-estimate inventory. The results showed that there was a significant correlation between EQ and counselling self-efficacy which all sub-constructs for both measures are well-associated with each other. In conclusion, these two variables are essential to ensure counselling students would move toward a better developing identity of counsellors-in-training and encourage the growth of professional competency among trainee counsellors in the future. Hence, it is vital for the government to ensure that quality counselling services should be provided for the community to deal with this problem.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Based on the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) [1], nearly half a million adults (2.3%) in Malaysia are found to have symptoms of stress or depression. This phenomenon was aggravated by the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had caused numerous adverse impacts, including human mental health issues [2]. Hence, the Malaysian government needs to ensure the community's quality of counselling services to cater to this problem. Substantial attention is continuously being given to the counselling program in Malaysia in order to strengthen the curriculum, ethics, and professionalism aiming to provide quality training for future counsellors. Thus, the Malaysian board of counsellors, also known as Lembaga Kaunselor Malaysia (LKM), provides rules and requirements for all the counselling students (counsellors-in-training) to be abided in order to obtain a registered counsellor. A structure of the counselling curriculum designed emphasis developing counselling skills, personality and ethics, and experiential learning component to practice skills in the actual settings. During the practice in the actual settings (practicum and internship), students reported many challenges [3].

Meola *et al.* [4] found that counselling students might experience several aspects while in the practicum/internship experience. There could be performance anxiety, observation of professional gatekeepers, rigid emotional boundaries, no identities, less competent in case conceptualizing and influence of supervisor expectation and relationships; eventually may cause pressure to them. According to Mansor and Yusoff [5], the most common feedback from counsellors-in-training is a feeling of self-doubt about counselling skills and theoretical application. Therefore, in order to understand the emotional turmoil experienced by the counsellors-in-training, the emotional quotient (EQ) should be investigated.

The emotional quotient is the ability to drive competencies and skills that can influence individual leadership performance [6]. It is a predictor of success and may have a positive life impact on an individual. EQ elements since in training and helping professions, the curriculum of training has been introduced to them with a process of handling the emotions, managing positive self-care, and developing effective interpersonal communication in therapy.

Self-efficacy represents a good indication of excellent performance for counsellors-in-training to seek the competency levels. In other words, self-efficacy is a prediction action and counselling behavior to perform better as an effective counsellor [7]. On a similar note, self-efficacy is an ability of a counsellor to conduct the sessions with clients in regard to providing quality therapy. Larson [8] depicted self-efficacy in four aspects: mastery, modeling, social persuasion, and affective arousal. All the four aspects are closely associated with counselling skills, professionalism, competency and expectation of counsellor behaviors during the sessions. However, little is known about how counselling students embrace their EQ to manage self-competency and self-efficacy during the counselling sessions. There is evidence in a study that EQ has a positive relationship with self-efficacy among nursing students during practicum training. This study also found a connection between empathy reaction and the patients.

Malaysian Board of Counsellors has set out 11 thrusts as a standard for all the counselling programs in every institution in Malaysia. All thrusts are: i) Human growth and development; ii) Social and cultural foundations; iii) Helping relationships; iv) Group counselling; v) Career counselling; vi) Assessment in counselling; vii) Research and program evaluation; viii) Professional orientation counselling; ix) Practicum; x) Internship; and xi) Other elective and research project courses for classes [9]. This curriculum pillar purposely establishes quality training in the counselling program offered at the university levels. As all the mentioned components, practicum and internship will be the measures for a supervisor to evaluate counselling performances after undergoing the training. Final-year students will take both courses, where most of the training courses and required components are completed. At this stage, counselling students are expected to perform better as they will be engaging with real clients in real settings. Counselling students will use the helping skills, come out with a specific diagnosis, integrate with one particular intervention, and develop their own identity and style [10]. Most of the skills taught in the classroom will be tested at this point. In addition, students will employ theory in practice on whatever they have learned in the classroom in the practicum and internship courses [11].

In the counselling program, internship and practicum must fulfill more than 600 hours at the site altogether. It is a part of the requirement for them to graduate and earn a degree in counselling. These clinical hours are critically important for the graduate to soon apply as a registered counsellor by LKM. Most of the clinical hours include face-to-face counselling sessions (individual and group), writing case notes, management, case conceptualization, psychological test sessions and psycho-educational programs, and development programs [12]. It was definitely an intense situation for counselling students to fill those hours, and it is necessary to have proper guidance from academic supervisors as well as site supervisors. Usually, the trainee counsellor has to make a good relationship with them to gain support, guidance, and positive encouragement along with the practicum and internship experiences.

In many studies, trainee counsellors would struggle with many competency issues in their practicum and internship experiences. The trainee counsellors may experience anxiety, less directional, and pressure to complete the clinical hours during the practicum experience [13]. In the meantime, they have to juggle between tasks at one time. The unique experiences will affect self-competency while delivering the counselling sessions. An excellent EQ is predicted to manage a person skillfully. Therefore, any possible challenges during practicum/internship can be coped with an excellent EQ. If the trainee counsellors perform well during their training, they might create a career opportunity in the setting. If the counsellor educators could address this element, the counselling program could develop the EQ skills among students in the classroom. Developing the EQ element associated with the interpersonal process will predict the counselling self-efficacy while they go for internship training. This study aims to investigate the EQ and counselling self-efficacy levels among counsellors-in-training and examine the relationships between these variables. This study contributes to program evaluation research in counselor education programs by showing the connection between counselling self-efficacy and EQ in counselors-in-training in counsellor education program.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Counselling program is a popular field among programs at the university levels that will be an option for students to develop a career as professional helpers. Nowadays, there are many counselling courses and programs offered in Malaysia at several universities such as Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT), Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). Additionally, most of the counselling training programs are accredited by Lembaga Kaunselor Malaysia with the same program structure.

A literature review shows that teaching counselling ultimately relies on the educators' philosophy, professional context, the social nature of learning, academic discipline, and content type to develop student engagement, even while teaching in a training modality [14], [15]. In the field of counselling, the courses are often taught within a humanistic and experiential framework. Therefore, instructors may include the elements of practice to engage them with real-world issues [16].

Counselling instructors typically integrate a real-world context as a pedagogical tool to relate theory to practice and help enhance learning outcomes [17]. Thus, the ability to facilitate students' reflection, explore feelings (reflective dialogue), demonstrate cultural sensitivity (cultural immersion), foster positive relationships, and construct students' personal meanings are essential elements for counselling training [18]. Additionally, this practice may create extra challenges if the novice counsellors are not competent and comfortable talking, whereas the counselling field relies heavily on interpersonal interaction [19].

At the end of the counselling program, the counsellors-in-training seek a registered counsellor certification by LKM. Their own act controls counselling profession, counselor act 580, which has the power to supervise all services provided by counsellors and all activities related to counselling in Malaysia [9]. It is a statutory body under the ministry of women, family, and society development. Given the complexity of the social problems and the need for trained and qualified personnel to address these problems, the counsellors act 1998 was enacted in 1998. The act provides for the registration and practices of counsellors in Malaysia and the establishment of the board of counsellors to ensure professionalism and high standards among counsellors [20]. With the implementation, it is mandatory for all counsellors to be registered with the board under the counselor act 1998 (580). The main responsibility of the LKM is to oversee and regulate counselling services in Malaysia. Counselor exists in schools, universities, public services, drug rehabilitation centers, prisons, religious and health centers, corporations, and communities. As we abided by LKM's guidelines to produce registered counsellors, the supervision must be empowered at the training levels. Although supervision provides students with practical skills development [21] counselling students may begin practicum with low self-efficacy regarding their counselling abilities and skills.

Emotions are essential aspects of the human experience; how one feels influences how one thinks and behaves. The influence of emotions is significant in coloring one's life. Emotions include various feelings such as happy, angry, scared, worried, disappointed, sad, embarrassed, affectionate, and many more. Emotions involve sensory elements (hearing, sight, and others), perceptions, personal history, beliefs, thoughts, and physical and individual goals [22]. Western scholars often use the word emotion. Goleman [23] defined emotion as a specific feeling and thought, a biological and psychological state, and an individual's tendency to act. While emotional intelligence is the ability to reveal and recognize one's feelings and the feelings of others, the ability to motivate oneself and the ability to manage one's own emotions and build relationships with other individuals. In other words, the processing capacity for emotion-related information can be thought of as emotional intelligence [24].

Regulating emotions and coping with emotional experiences are the most common reasons individuals seek counselling. Counsellors must be uniquely equipped in processing and managing emotional content. Counsellor's skills and abilities related to emotional intelligence are vital to effective counselling. There is an indication that confidence in one's counselling skills may be equally as important as competence in these skills. Previous researchers have conducted studies related to emotional intelligence. They believe that emotional intelligence is vital and has various implications on human activities such as leadership, professional development, mental health, family life, and marriage [25].

In discussing the concept of emotional intelligence, Kidwell and Hasford [26] stated that emotional intelligence can influence a person in workplace performance, physical health, and personal relationships. In fact, emotional intelligence becomes a starting point in determining success both personally and professionally [27]. Therefore, if an individual is able to understand and control his own emotions, the individual will be able to express his feelings and understand the feelings of other individuals better at the same time. This can make communication more effective, and closer relationships can be forged either in the context of one's personal life or at work as a counsellor.

In another study, Gutierrez, Mullen, and Fox [28] explored the relationship between counselling trainees' EQ, empathy, stress, distress, and demographic. Results indicated that higher levels of EQ were

associated with lower stress and distress, higher affective and cognitive empathy, and age. Important to highlight that higher EQ is related to higher counsellor empathy and higher EQ is related to lower stress and distress. Bar-On's model of emotional intelligence is referred to as "noncognitive intelligence" [29]. Noncognitive intelligence is defined as "an array of emotional, personal, and social abilities and skills that influence an individual's ability to cope effectively with environmental demands and pressures" [29].

In Jarwan and Al-Frehat [30], a study about investigating counsellors' self-efficacy and professional competence. In the study, a number of 88 school counsellors were associated with professional competence for counsellors. Furthermore, the findings revealed that the higher your educational levels and the more experiences you have, the higher your self-efficacy and professional competence as a counsellor. The study concluded that counsellors' self-efficacy is associated with professional competence, which may affect the motivation and professional identity of the counsellor.

Pearson and Weinberg [31] conducted a study about the impact of counsellors-in-training on emotional intelligence with 45 undergraduates and 58 postgraduates. Students reported significant improvement on completion of both programs as it successfully enhanced intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects of emotional functioning among students. As a group, postgraduates were older than undergraduates, and at the outset of the study, Emotional Intelligence Self Assessment Questionnaire (EISAQ) scores were comparable; however, undergraduates recorded significantly higher EISAQ scores at follow-up. Students' EQ was not significantly related to their age, and these findings indicate the potential for effective EQ skills training which is related to the quantity of life experience.

Self-efficacy as a theory is "based on the assumption that people's sense of personal efficacy mediates the relationship between what they actually know how to do and what they actually do" [32]. This statement allows one to explore how emotional intelligence impacts one's self-efficacy. According to Bandura [33], efficacy involves "a generative capability in which component cognitive, social, and behavioral skills must be organized into an integrated course of action to serve an innumerable purpose." Self-efficacy theory is aligned with the goal of developing an instrument that would measure the attributes of counsellors; the theory was the theoretical underpinning of the Counselling Self-Estimate Inventory (COSE) [32]. Through a series of studies, Larson developed the COSE, which comprises a cluster of skills related to counselling self-efficacy [32]. Counselling self-efficacy is defined as one's belief in one's ability to perform counselling activities, and it is related to counsellor performance and ability. Increased clinical experience has been connected with higher levels of counsellor self-efficacy [34].

Within pedagogy literature, research suggests that counsellor competency could be best developed through critical thinking activities such as role-play, modeling, and receiving feedback [18], [35]. Such activities build student self-efficacy to help them cope with real-work challenges [14]. These purposeful and challenging interventions, which are essential for developing counselling self-efficacy, have been found to be most effective early in skill training [15]. Even though trainee counsellors may not feel confident or be fully prepared in their skills, research has found that experience in the field will likely compensate for any early deficiencies [24]. As such, self-efficacy has been higher among counsellors with more education in counselling, more years of experience practicing counselling, and more supervision [19].

Counsellor skills and abilities include areas that relate to emotional intelligence. There are important abilities necessary in becoming a counsellor that includes: i) Oral comprehension: the ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences; and ii) Problem sensitivity: the ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong [36]. All of these encompass one or more of the abilities related to emotional intelligence. Finally, identifying low levels of emotional intelligence on various subscales of the Bar-On may then provide a basis for individualized instruction with students preparing to be counsellors.

In a recent study, Okoie and Anusiem [37] investigated the effects of emotional intelligence on undergraduate counselling practicum trainees in South-East Nigeria. A finding show that emotional intelligence is a very productive and effective construct to enhance counselling self-efficacy. The study suggests that all counsellors-in-training are good at engaging with psychological programs, training modules, and activities that can enhance their emotional intelligence levels and professional competencies. It will be suitable for new counsellors to establish creativity, innovative idea, knowledge, and experience in providing professional services to humanity.

Odaci, Değerli, and Bolat [38] explored the relationships between EQ and counselling skills among counsellors. Participant were 346 counsellors in counselling psychological and services who responded the Bar-On emotional quotient inventory and microcounseling skill discrimination scale. The results found a significant negative correlation between EQ and emotional reflection and general counselling skills; no significant correlation between EQ and content reflection. However, it is reported that EQ does influence counselling skills while in the sessions with the clients. Emotional intelligence may be a factor for individuals engaging with deep self-exploration and it would also be uplifting counsellor performances.

In other study, Asude and Zeynep [39] investigated the relationship between emotional literacy, cognitive flexibility, and counselling self-efficacy. Participants were 397 counselling students from Ankara University. This study includes the emotional literacy scale, cognitive flexibility scale and counseling self-efficacy scale as the measurement for the study. The results found that emotional literacy has a connection with counselling self-efficacy and cognitive flexibility. In conclusion, emotional literacy may influence counselling self-efficacy and cognitive activity of the counsellor-in-training. It is asserted that emotion intelligence will allow counsellor to comprehend the other person's emotions and perform the counselling sessions more effectively, and it would help the clients to gain insights as well. Emotional intelligence may be a unique construct inherent in persons preparing for a career as professional counsellors.

A study explored the influence of emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and prosocial behavior on counselling students at the University of Yogyakarta [40]. This study used a proportion random sampling by other institutions that offered counselling programs: Ahmad Dahlan University, Sanata Dharma University, PGRI University, Yogyakarta University of Technology, Mercu Buana University, and IKIP PGRI Wates. The study figured out an association between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, prosocial behavior, and interpersonal conflict management. All variables are contributed to the efficiency of counselling students in handling the counselling sessions. Even though the past studies found the relationships, we have no studies on the nature of Malaysia's counselling training regarding practicum and internship placements. This study also will like to emphasize the role of supervision in providing better support for counsellors who may have challenges at the first beginning career as professional counsellors.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study focuses on Malaysian undergraduate and graduate students in counselling programs enrolled in 2020 and 2021. The demographic factors included in this research are gender, level of program, age, and current grade point average (GPA). A survey method approach was used in this study. The participants were asked to complete a survey that contained two reliable instrumentations, the Bar-On emotional quotient inventory (EQ-i) test [41] and counselling self-estimate inventory [32]. Both the instrumentation proceeded with a translation process in language version. As part of data collection, this study included demographic questions, Bar-On EQ-i, and counselling self-estimate inventory [32] to report some descriptive information and evidence of relationships and effects.

The questionnaire was used in this research. It consists of three parts which are labeled as: i) Demographic factors; ii) Bar-on EQ-i; and iii) Counselling self-estimate inventory (COSE). The demographic data that were measured include gender (male and female), race (Malay, Chinese, Indian, and others), level of program (undergraduate and graduate), age, and grade point average. The survey took about 20 to 30 minutes to complete all three parts.

3.1. Bar-On emotional quotient inventory (EQ-i)

The researcher employed Bar-On EQ-i, which Bar-On originally designed in the 1980s to evaluate emotional intelligence counsellors-in-training. The Bar-On EQ-i test (EQ-i) is a self-report measure of emotionally and socially intelligent behavior that estimates emotional-social intelligence [41]. While the original version of the questionnaire encompasses 133 Likert-type items, the domestically standardized version of the test has been translated by Marzuki, Mustafa, and Saad [42] for Malay short-version. The survey contains Bar-On EQ-i test questions to measure the EQ of the trainee counsellors. This instrument has five sub-dimensions: i) Intrapersonal scale-10 items: self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, and self-actualization; ii) Interpersonal scale-10 items: empathy, social responsibility, interpersonal relationship; iii) Adjustment scale-7 items: adaptability, reality testing, flexibility and problem solving; iv) Stress management scale-8 items: stress tolerance, and impulse control; and v) General mood scale-10 items: optimism and happiness and positive impression scale-6 items. The inventory uses a Likert scale point (from 1=not true of me to 5=true of me). High scores indicate high emotional intelligence levels, while low scores indicate low emotional intelligence levels.

3.2. Counselling self-estimate inventory

The study used a self-report inventory, the Counselling Self-Estimate Inventory [32], to measure counselling self-efficacy. The questions are regarding the counselling skills, micro-skills, counselling process, difficult client behavior, cultural competence, and awareness of values. The reliability of the inventory was in an excellent value, with Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.93. The total score for five subdomains were 0.88 for micro-skills, 0.87 for processing, 0.80 for difficult client behavior, 0.80 for cultural competence, and 0.78 for awareness of values. The score ranged from 37 to 222, with a higher total score representing a higher perception of counselling self-efficacy [39].

The items for COSE were back-translated into Malay for the use of this study. As the survey was distributed in Malaysia, Malay-translated versions of the COSE was warranted. The study followed back translation steps recommended by Gjersing, Caplehorn, and Clausen [43] which include: i) Translate original items; ii) A synthesized translated version; iii) Back translated; iv) A synthesized back translated version; v) A group of expert committees would evaluate the final version for clarity and relevance as well as establish a face and content validity. The group panel consisted of faculty members who have expertise in counsellor education; a faculty with at least five years' experience teaching counselling; and one expert faculty familiar with scale development. The invited expert committee were informed of the purpose and the nature of their role in the study via email and expert review form. All materials were emailed along with a review guide and item of the COSE. Also, they were asked to provide specific comments and feedback on each item, as well as on the overall instrument. Items were eliminated or re-worded based on feedback from the expert panel. Necessary adaptations to the items were determined from this feedback. In addition, this review process was used to obtain a consensus from all three expert panels to establish content validity for all items of the COSE.

3.3. Participants, sampling procedure and data analysis

The sampling procedure was convenience sampling with some criteria. For this study, the criteria were counselling students who are: i) Currently in the final year; ii) Enrolled either practicum or internship courses in 2020/2021; iii) In undergraduate and graduate programs accredited by LKM; iv) Practicum/internship site: agency and school; and v) One supervisor who is a registered counsellor. Convenience sampling was also employed in this research for a number of reasons. First, the students selected for this study were particularly accessible because they attended two selected core courses; practicum and internship to measure the counselling self-efficacy and EQ levels. Second, these two courses provided a significant focus because they cover the clinical experience and supervision altogether to develop self-efficacy. Third, by gaining a greater understanding of the students' EQ levels and counselling self-efficacy would expect to predict the proficiency and competency in term of skills while having clients in the real setting.

Convenience sampling technique fits with the study purposes as it is used to obtain effective sample, acquire a range of attitude and opinion and test the hypotheses in the research [44]. This study took 10 minutes to read the informed consent and 20 to 30 minutes to complete the overall survey. This study was conducted for students who are currently enrolled in 2020/2021 practicum and internship courses at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), and Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (UniSHAMS). The study made the recruitment process among counselling students located in Perlis, Kedah, and Pulau Pinang at any practicum and internship placement (Northern Region of Peninsular Malaysia). The supervisors were contacted to disseminate the survey to the counselling students for data collection. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used as the analytic tool to examine the data in this study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were 385 students responded to the recruitment email and followed the survey to participate in the study. A total of 373 students (96.8%) were Malay, four students (1.1%) were Chinese, three students (0.8%) were Indian, and five students (1.3%) identified as Other. The age of the participants ranged from 19 to 33 years old ($M=22.3$, $SD=1.73$), where 110 (28.6%) of them were male, and 275 (71.74%) were female. There were 218 students (56%) of the total sample reported from other institutions, while 167 participants (43.4%) were from Universiti Utara Malaysia. There were 352 students (91.4%) from undergraduate degree programs in counselling, and 33 students (8.6%) were postgraduate students. Finally, students reported GPAs between 3.21 to 3.95 ($M=3.596$, $SD=0.3086$). A summary of these results is available in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of participant demographics and characteristics

Characteristic		Frequency	Percent of sample (%)
Training course	Counselling practicum	218	56.6
	internship	167	43.4
Level of program	Undergraduate	352	91.4
	Postgraduate	33	8.6
Gender	Male	110	28.6
	Female	275	71.4
Race	Malay	373	96.8
	Chinese	4	1.1
	India	3	0.8
	Other	5	1.3
	GPA		($M=3.21-3.95$)
Age		($M=19-33$)	

4.1. The EQ and counselling self-efficacy levels

The Bar-On EQ-i Scale score for this sample resulted in a minimum score of 33 and a maximum score of 98 (range of 100, $M=77$, $SD=14.92$). Scores were intrapersonal subscale ($M=70.1$, $SD=5.5$), interpersonal subscale ($M=81.2$, $SD=3.3$), interpersonal subscale ($M=83.1$, $SD=7.4$), adjustment subscale ($M=65$, $SD=6.5$), stress management subscale ($M=77$, $SD=9.1$), and general mood subscale ($M=75$, $SD=13.2$). All scores are converted based on a range of 100 and $SD=15$, followed by a technical manual. Based on the result, this finding revealed that the level of the Interpersonal Subscale was the highest compared to other dimensions in EQ-i.

A total of 385 participants completed Counselling Self-Estimate Inventory. The range score is between 62 to 222, with high scores indicating higher levels of counselling self-efficacy. Scores were calculated for composite total counselling self-efficacy ($M=178$, $SD=1.55$). In detail as per dimensions, micro-skills subscale ($M=65$, $SD=4.4$), processing subscale ($M=56$, $SD=6.6$), difficult client behaviors subscale ($M=33$, $SD=5.6$), cultural competence ($M=14$, $SD=3.44$), and awareness of values subscale ($M=15$, $SD=5.7$). This result concluded that most respondents represented the highest micro-skills compared to other counselling self-efficacy dimensions.

Based on the Bar-On EQ-i scale score, the EQ levels for most of the participants are above the mean criterion for moderate EQ. It can be interpreted that maybe counselling students have naturally good interpersonal skills and are more attuned to connecting with others and maintaining social relationships. COSE had also indicated them at exceptional levels. The study showed that being in practicum and internship may make students more aware of what knowledge and skills are essential to them and strive to increase competency levels while dealing with the client in the sessions.

4.2. The correlation of eq (each dimension) with counselling self-estimate inventory

The bivariate correlation between the Bar-On and the COSE scale scores was illustrated in Table 2. All sub-scales were mostly significant correlations (90% of the possible pairs) between the scales of both instruments. Based on the r values, this study indicated that adaptability in the EQ dimension shows the highest significant correlation with cultural competence, $r(383)=0.89$, $p<0.05$, followed by awareness of values, $r(383)=0.88$, $p<0.05$ subscale of the COSE. Also, only the general mood subscale has a significant relationship with the executing micro-skill subscale of the COSE, $r(383)=0.88$, $p<0.05$. Interestingly, the interpersonal subscale of EQ was correlated significantly with some COSE Subscale; deal with difficult client's behavior $r(383)=0.83$, $p<0.05$, cultural competence $r(383)=0.75$, $p<0.01$ and awareness of values $r(383)=0.82$, $p<0.05$. On the other hand, intrapersonal was the only subscale that showed a significant relationship with the attending process subscale, $r(383)=0.84$, $p<0.05$ than any other subscale on Bar-On EQ-I. The result also revealed that the stress management subscale has the lowest significant relationship with awareness of values, $r(383)=0.44$, $p<0.05$.

Table 2. Bar-On scale related to the scores of the counselling self-estimate inventory

	COSE scales					
	Executing micro skills	Attending process	Difficult client's behavior	Cultural competence	Aware of values	Overall score COSE
Overall bar-on scales	.64*	.86*	.67*	.55*	.73*	.78**
Intrapersonal	.70	.84*	.65	.77	.69	.88*
Interpersonal	.77	.85	.83*	.75**	.82*	.86*
Stress management	.74	.65	.78	.30	.44*	.64*
Adaptability	.33	.41	.76	.89*	.88*	.55*
General mood	.88*	.70	.58	.51	.66	.69*

** $p<.01$, 2-tailed and * $p<.05$, 2-tailed

Overall, the result suggests a strong relationship between emotional intelligence and counselling self-efficacy. This study revealed that interpersonal and adaptability components are salient factors in determining counsellor self-efficacy, especially in awareness of values and cultural competent. Moreover, counsellor emotional intelligence on interpersonal component showed a connection with dealing with difficult client and cultural competence. These findings may provide an understanding of interpersonal and adaptability toward clients will develop cultivated behaviors among counsellors-in-training. Counsellors with these positive elements like empathy, social responsibility, and elastic personality will impact the counsellor's ability to deal with difficult clients. In training, strengthening counselling skills and good attitudes will develop interpersonal ability to understand and interpret client feelings and feedback and be empathic, genuine, and respectful within the counselling environment.

In dealing with client behavior, a trainee counsellor must acquire the ability and skills that are essential to effectively work with clients who are passive and in great sorrow [4]. Counsellors are expected to be competent in providing services in a therapeutic environment [13]. Not only that, but counsellors' personal values also may influence during sessions with clients. In brief, a counsellor with a good set of emotional intelligence would make the therapy more effective as the counsellors can respect clients and other personal values. In the result, counsellors' general mood in EQ was strongly correlated to the executing micro-skills. A high general mood among counsellors, such as happiness, optimism, and positive impression, will encourage the growth of the counsellor's micro-skills. According to Egan [45], micro-skills can include attending and responding to the client and, at the same time, understanding and interpreting the client's emotions and thoughts of the client.

This study complements past researches and contributes to the literature by supporting the connection between EQ and counselling self-efficacy. The findings also show not only a positive relationship between variables, but it has a strong link between all the variables; as well as, showing a direct connection between EQ and counselling self-efficacy subscales within the overarching constructs. Both constructs of EQ and counselling self-efficacy are visualized as a unique characteristic that can be potentially developed in the students. Although counselling self-efficacy literature has shown a positive correlation between professional competence, intrapersonal and interpersonal aspect on emotional, critical thinking and prosocial behaviors, this study was unable to show specifics to support EQ previous result which more related to mental health, maturity, cognitive and emotional functioning. This current study did not specifically look into how the counselling self-efficacy was developed among students' performance at the individual level as this study followed a survey research design. Previous research also suggests EQ is associated with counselling self-efficacy [37]; however, this current study offered more evidences that element of EQ and its dimensions indicated a very strong predictor in relation to counselling self-efficacy based on the statistical results, specifically for students who were in the practicum and internship experience.

From the result, counsellor educators need to conduct the assessment from time to time on students' performance in the counselling program. In this case, assessing a counselling student's level of emotional intelligence may help us provide a basis for students on how to improve the students in acquiring self-confidence and skills. Furthermore, it could focus on developing self-efficacy as well. As counsellor educators teach counselling skills, it will be beneficial to emotional intelligence components to enhance the competency levels and sustain the learned skills. In regard to that, teaching the counselors-in-training how to become more aware of their ability to regulate and manage their own emotions and performance levels in their basic foundations skills or techniques course could make a difference for the counselors-in-training when they enter into their clinical coursework [46]. Awareness training of the best practice to enhance competency within practicum and internship courses using the element of EQ and self-efficacy, would make it a difference for the counselor-in-training's performance and professional success overall.

While students develop a higher level of emotional intelligence as counsellors, they can model these abilities within the therapeutic setting, thus providing positive examples of emotional handling aspects with their potential clients. As we know, there are many concerns and issues that clients bring in the therapy, which associate with feelings, emotions, perception, and how to know the client within the context of the problem (phenomenological). Counsellors may help the clients in the aspect of emotional intelligence intrapersonal, interpersonal, adjustment, stress management, and general mood. Helping counsellors-in-trainings with their growing emotional intelligence would develop competency and increase the levels of counselling self-efficacy at once [47]. Later, a growing element of emotional intelligence would help students establish a professional identity when they are in charge of the counselling and therapy sessions.

In the area of supervision, the counsellor educators may give constructive feedback to increase counselling self-efficacy. Feedback would help counsellors-in-trainings develop self-confidence and competence in the counselling sessions. In addition, counsellor educators as supervisors may help counsellors-in-trainings strengthen their counselling self-efficacy by providing valuable feedback into the supervision process on both emotional intelligence and counselling skills abilities. Furthermore, feedback provides a method for decreasing the anxiety and fear while in handling the counselling case and assist students to feel more confident optimistic in their counselling abilities [48].

From this study, it is also interesting to highlight the role of EQ levels for counselling students since many of them did not highlight this ability and motivation as a viable encouragement that is available for them to perform well in the counselling sessions. Additionally, it is recommended that assessing emotional intelligence within a counselling setting using a performance measure among trainee counselors may be beneficial in more accurately assessing one's abilities. It is that possible emotional intelligence may be a unique construct that has stability as well as being a competency that can be developed through acquiring knowledge and skills. Further research is needed to investigate the degree to which emotional intelligence is stable and can be developed over time.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study provides evidence that emotional intelligence and counselling self-efficacy may help the growth of counsellors during the training. The study found that the potential variables may provide counsellor educators with how to prepare students for counselling experience and the area of supervision. Finally, the element of emotional intelligence could overcome the anxiety and fear with new clients and increase confidence levels in the sessions. In conclusion, a study shows a strong relationship between emotional intelligence and counselling efficacy, which can influence counselling-in training in working with clients. These two elements need to be considered to be nurtured in the assessment of future counselling programs.

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