The Relationship between Emotional Quotient and Learning Behavior of Fourth Year University Students

Mali Praditsang

Faculty of Education, Songkhla Rajabhat University, Songkhla, Thailand
Email: noomom@hotmail.com

Zahyah Hanafi

School of Education & Modern Languages, College of Arts & Sciences, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah, Malaysia
Email: zahyah@uum.edu.my

Doi:10.5901/mjss.2015.v6n2p563

Abstract

This paper aimed to examine the relationship between emotional quotient and learning behavior of fourth year students at a university in the south of Thailand. Specifically the study examined 1) the level of emotional quotient and learning behavior, 2) the learning behavior of students with different personal factors and 3) the relationship between emotional quotient and learning behavior. The subjects were 520 fourth year students in the second semester of the 2012 academic year. The instrument used was a questionnaire consisting 3 parts: personal factors, emotional quotient and learning behavior. Percentage was used in analyzing the data on the level of emotional quotient and learning behavior and the findings revealed that the students had high levels of emotional quotient and learning behavior. Independent Group t-test and One-way ANOVA were used to compare the learning behavior of the subjects with different personal factors. It was found that students whose fathers had different levels of education and academic achievement had significantly different learning behavior. Pearson Correlations Coefficients test was used to test the relationship among variables, found that emotional quotient was positively correlated with the students' learning behavior.

Keywords: *Emotional Quotient, Learning Behavior, University Students*

1. Introduction

Thailand National Education Act, B.E. 2542 indicates that Thailand education system should aimed at developing the Thai people to be healthy physically and mentally, including the development of intelligence; cognitively, morally, and ethical. They should also be able to live harmoniously with other members in the society. However, at present Thailand education system placed much emphasis on the intelligence aspects hoping to develop students academically. As a result, most students concentrate more on memorizing knowledge which eventually leads to emotional problems like stress and this in turns make them lose concentration in their education (Sangnapaboworn, 2003). These problems are not due to low intelligence quotient but rather to weak emotional quotient. Those with high intelligence but had low emotional quotient were reported to be less happy (Khosla & Dokania, 2010). Unhappiness may further lead to other emotional and psychological problems. Therefore, the authorities concern need to ensure that students' emotional quotient is looked after so that it does not leave an impact on their study.

So what is emotional quotient ? According to Goleman (1998) emotional quotient is the capacity in recognizing one's own feelings and those of others, the ability to motivate our self, and able to manage our emotions well within our self and in our relationships with others. Emotional quotient involves five factors: self-awareness (recognition of one's moods, emotions, and drives and its effects on others), self-regulation (control or redirecting convulsive impulses and emotions and thinking before acting), motivation (genuine desire to work enthusiastically and consistently), empathy (understanding the emotional makeup of other people, and hence being able to treat them according to their emotional reactions), and finally, social skill (managing relationships and building networks and rapport on the common ground established).

Goleman conducted a study on administrators with high level of education but low emotional quotient and discovered that they were not successful in their work; 90% of their success resulted from their low emotional quotient.

Similar results were also reported in Sugarathemi's study (2000) which compared the intelligence quotient and emotional quotient of successful engineers, teachers, nurses, signers and monks. Thus, emotional quotient was found to be an essential contributing factor to the success of people in various professions.

The research above showed that emotional quotient is one of the factors crucial for the success of a person in his/her study, work, family, personal life and life with other people in the society because it plays an important role in enabling him/her to perceive his/her own and others' emotions and feelings. This is beneficial especially to students as it can cultivate constructive motivation in them (Pannitamai, 2002). Therefore, this study attempts to uncover the underlining relationship between emotional quotient and learning behavior as the findings of this study will enlighten us with the importance role played by emotional quotient in students' academic life at the university.

Learning behavior, on the other hand is also an important aspect of a student's life because the effectiveness and success of a student in his learning is partly due to his learning behavior. Kanthakaew (2008) defined learning behavior as the action or practice the students do while learning in order to develop their knowledge, skills and proficiency. In addition to this, other contributing factors to learning behavior were also discovered. For example, Corsini (2002) indicates goal setting which is a process of placing future goals as a guide what one is to done, Good (1973) on the other hand, suggested perseverance as an individual's quest to successfully achieve the assigned work, and Brisbane (1994) identified self-discipline, the ability to control one's own behavior by oneself. Lately, wise time management (Nonis & Hudson, 2010) is believed to bring an overall progress both to the individual and to the society because time is valuable, meaningful and important to everyone.

The factors mentioned above highlighted the individual's attitude towards learning, motivation to succeed, time usage and the quest for learning and these were found to have significant positive relationships with students' learning behavior.

In order to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement, Holt (2007) explores the undergraduate students in a community college in Southern California. This study confirms a relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement, as measured by GPA, suggesting that emotional intelligence contributes to and enhances cognitive abilities in college students. Hence, it can be concluded that good learning behavior results from emotional intelligence and this in turns instills academic success. This study focused on five types of observable learning behavior influenced by personal factors: goal setting, perseverance, self-discipline, responsibility and time used.

2. Method

Participants: Yamane's formula (1973) was used to identify the sample size of 520 from the population of 1,013 Fourth Year students in the second semester of 2012 academic year at a university in southern Thailand. The reliability level of 95% was adopted.

Measures: This study used a quantitative approach as the findings can be generalized to the context of the study. The data was collected using a survey questionnaire which was composed of 3 sections: 1) personal information 2) emotional quotient and 3) learning behavior. In order to fulfill the objectives of this paper Mean, S.D., and percentage were used to gauge the level of emotional quotient and learning behavior. In addition, Independent Group t-test and One-way ANOVA were also used to compare the learning behavior of the respondents with different personal factors. Finally, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the relationship between variables at 0.05 level of the significance.

3. Results and Discussion

The results and the discussion of the study are presented in 3 parts.

Part 1: Levels of emotional quotient and learning behavior. The level of emotional quotient and learning behavior are presented in Table 1 and 2 below.

Table 1: Mean, S.D., and Percentage of Emotional Quotient Level

(n=520)

Emotional Quotient	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level Low(%)	Medium(%)	High(%)
1. Self-awareness	3.8695	.45749	0.0	29.8	70.0
2. Self-regulation	3.8164	.49479	0.2	35.2	64.6
3. Self-motivation	3.9919	.47681	0.2	23.5	76.3
4. Empathy	4.0431	.50812	0.2	20.2	79.8
5. Social skills	3.9729	.47222	0.0	23.2	76.8
Average	3.9387	.39726	0.0	24.6	75.4

Table 2: Mean, S.D., and Percentage of Learning Behavior Level

(n=520)

Learning Behavior	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level Low (%)	Medium (%)	High (%)
1. Goal setting	4.1675	.55345	0.0	14.7	85.3
2. Perseverance	3.9166	.50923	0.0	27.4	71.8
3. Self-discipline	4.0588	.54748	0.8	20.7	79.1
4. Responsibility	4.0165	.48260	0.2	21.3	78.7
5. Time use	3.8487	.52086	0.0	33.4	66.2
Average	4.0010	.41789	0.4	21.5	78.5

The table shows that most students had high level of emotional quotient and learning behavior. The results are in accordance with a study by Pannitamai (2002) reporting that children with high level of emotional quotient are fast learners, who feel good about themselves and others, optimistic, and are adaptive to different situations and as a result, they are appreciated and recognized by their peers. Based on this finding, these 4th year students must have been successful in their study to a certain extent. In terms of learning behavior, goal setting was at the highest level, followed by self-discipline, and being responsible. This finding reflects that they are getting ready for the adult world of work and family life, in line with those mentioned in Kaewkangwan's study (2002).

Part 2: Learning behavior of students with different personal factors. It was found that students with different personal factors had different learning behavior. The details are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Learning Behavior of Students with Different Personal Factors

(n=520)

Personal factor	Number	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	t/F	Paired
Sex				t = .236	
Male	116	4.0084	.42927		
Female	394	3.9979	.41646		
Age				F= 1.194	
20 – 21	89	3.9531	.43713		
22 – 24	410	4.0110	.41013		
25 onwards	11	4.1255	.44336		
Study program				t = -.690*	
Science stream	146	3.9824	.36335		
Art stream	367	4.0084	.43795		
Study result				F = 4.499**	The different pair
2.00 – 2.50	196	3.9294	.43842		2.00-2.50and 2.51-3.00
2.51 – 3.00	179	4.0363	.40594		2.00-2.50and 3.01-3.50
3.01 – 3.50	60	4.0809	.41481		2.00-2.50and 3.51-4.00
3.51 – 4.00	21	4.1953	.41957		
Birth order				F = .864	
First	187	3.9841	.42310		
Second	135	4.0392	.43431		
Third onwards	187	3.9839	.40189		

Family status				F = 1.138	
Staying with parents	348	3.9856	.42303		
Staying with father	16	3.9285	.30641		
Staying with mother	43	4.1080	.47608		
Staying with relatives	18	4.0825	.29070		
Staying in a dorm	83	3.9900	.38835		
Marital status				F = 1.276	
Parents are together	407	3.9838	.41665		
Parents are separate	27	4.0079	.40490		
Parents are divorced	28	4.0175	.37788		
Father died	35	4.1479	.45637		
Mother died	12	3.9763	.42408		
Father's education level				F = 4.713**	The different pair was primary education and bachelor's degree education
Primary education	279	4.0336	.41165		
Secondary education	151	3.9579	.39689		
From bachelor's degree up	27	3.8054	.48191		

Table 3 (continued)

Mother's education level				F = 1.167	
Primary education	16	3.9311	.46682		
Secondary education	112	3.9649	.39666		
From bachelor's degree up	327	4.0262	.42543		
Father's occupation				F = .499	
Trader	56	3,9360	.38485		
Gardener	289	4.0032	.40544		
Government official	35	4.0135	.40772		
Hired worker	76	3.9744	.44242		
Mother's occupation				F = .376	
Trader	81	3.9684	.38961		
Gardener	283	4.0143	.42953		
Government official	15	4.0036	.38737		
Hired worker	53	4.0439	.48128		
Family income				F = 1.155	
1 -15,000	317	4.0252	.41361		
15,001 – 30,000	97	3.9508	.44658		
30,001 up	51	3.9991	.43824		

*p < .05 ,** p < .01

The results show that the differences in learning behavior of students with different personal factors were as follows:

Sex: Male students had an average learning behavior of 4.0084 while female had 3.9979 indicating that the male students' learning behavior were higher than the females' however, it was not statistically significant. The finding supports Romruen's study (2006) and it could be the result of the social cultural influence. Males in the Thai society are supposed to be the leader of the family. Hence, they need to do well in their study to ensure that their future will be secured. However, nowadays, more females are entering the professional sectors and can earn their own living so this could have contributed to the insignificance.

Age: Older students tend to have higher learning behavior but not significant. However, it was found that the older the students, the higher their learning behavior. This might be due to their being less focus in life because when they are young, they do not really know their priorities, skills, interest, and intelligence, and this could have contributed to their learning goal being unclear (Kanthakaew, 2008). Older students could have adapted to their learning and social environments better than the younger ones as they may be more matured and know what they want in life.

Program of study: The Art stream students had significantly higher learning behavior (0.05). The reason might be due to the fact that after graduating, employment for the art stream graduates is scarcer than those in the Science stream. If students in the Art stream hope to be employed after graduation, they need to do well in their study, thus, this could have contributed to them having higher learning behavior than those in the Science stream.

Learning achievement: The students with high level of achievement were found to have a tendency to be significantly higher in their learning behavior (.01). When analyzed using paired sample t-test, it was found that the pair with the significant difference in learning behavior was the groups with GPA of 2.00-2.50 and 2.51-3.00, 2.00-2.50 and

3.01-3.50, 2.00-2.50 and 3.51-4.00 respectively. This is in accordance with the findings by Romruen (2006) who found that students with different learning performance were also different in their learning behavior.

Birth order: Students who were the second child in the family were found to have higher learning behavior than other groups however the finding was not significant. This could be because the firstborn child usually receives all the love and care from parents and these parents usually expect the child to be a role model for the siblings (Chan-em, 1981). Thus, in order to avoid being blamed, it is possible that the second born child tries to put effort in his study to obtain good school performance.

Family status and marital status: The findings also revealed that students whose family status and parents' marital status was different did not have different learning behavior. For example, students whose father died and they lived with their mothers were found to have higher learning behavior compared to other groups however, it was insignificant. The reason could be that parents' care for their children and this is important to children's life and psychological conditions (Tham-amnuaisuk 1998). Students who receive good care and are close to their mothers feel more secure so they might have clearer goal in life. Also, the students whose father died might feel obliged to be responsible for making important decisions in their families, such as looking after family members, if they are the eldest in the family and thus, they are forced to work harder in their study.

Father's and mothers' level of education: Most of these students whose fathers have primary education were found to have significantly higher learning behavior compared to other groups (0.01). Paired sample t-test showed that the pair with significant difference in learning behavior were those who had fathers with primary and undergraduate educational levels. Students, whose father had only primary education, had a higher level of learning behavior than other groups of students. This supports Laophet's (2001) findings that fathers play a very important role in the child's development; physically, emotionally, and socially, in addition to their intelligence and personality. Fathers with low level of education usually had to work hard or do labor work so their children see this hardship in life. This coupled with their fathers' emphasis on the fact that having low level of education may lead to difficult future, could have made these students set their learning goal higher so that they could pursue higher level of education in the future. However, students who had mothers with different levels of education did not have significantly different learning behavior. The reason for this was probably because this is the Information Age where all information can be communicated and hence, it doesn't matter what level of education their mothers have since they can equally receive news and information via the mass media. This eventually leads to their similar overall learning behavior (Kanthakaew, 2008).

Father's occupation: The study revealed that parents with different occupations yielded no difference in students' learning behavior. Most students' fathers and mothers were gardeners. However it was found that students whose fathers were government officers were found to have higher learning behavior than other occupational group but it was not significant. Students with mothers who were hired workers had higher learning behavior than other occupational group however this was not significant. This is because fathers are important member in the family. As mentioned by Buriphakdi (1983) and Su-amphan (1993), fathers are the family economy and are responsible for their children's good education. Fathers who were government officials have secured income and do not have to strive to earn for their living so they have time to support and develop their children's learning behavior. On the other hand, students with mothers who were hired workers had higher levels of learning behavior than other occupational groups. This could probably be due to the current economic situation where there are more mothers going out to work so their role in nurturing their children may be reduced to the level of not as significant as it used to be (Kanthakaew, 2008). Hence, most students spend their time at the university to review their lessons and to talk and discuss with teachers and fellow students so they have higher level of learning behavior than other occupational groups.

Family income: Students whose family had an average income of 1–15,000 baht were found to have higher learning behavior than other groups however it was not significant. Students with whose family had an average family income of 1-5,000 baht/month had higher level of learning behavior compared to other family income group. This finding is in line with Romruen's study (2006) where it was found that students with different family income did not have different learning behavior.

Part 3: The relationship between emotional quotient and learning behavior

The Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficients test showed that there was positive relationship (see Table 4).

Table 4: Relationship between Emotional Quotient and Learning Behavior

(n=520)

Emotional Quotient	Learning Behavior					Overall
	Goal setting	Perseverance	Self-discipline	Responsibility	Time use	
1. Self-awareness	.460**	.490**	.468**	.496**	.396**	**.577****
2. Control	.440**	.511**	.437**	.478**	.450**	**.577****
3. Motivation	.522**	.572**	.490**	.567**	.475**	**.653****
4. Empathy	.513**	.473**	.455**	.482**	.379**	**.576****
5. Social skills	.431**	.596**	.456**	.490**	.518**	**.621****
Overall	**.575****	**.639****	**.558****	**.608****	**.536****	**.727****

** $p < 0.01$

The findings on the relationship between emotional quotient and learning behavior shows emotional quotient had an overall significant positive relationship with learning behavior (0.01). It was also found that all aspects of learning behavior had positive relationship with all dimensions of emotional quotient. Under the learning behavior, perseverance had positive relationship with emotional quotient, whereas self-motivation was at a higher level compared to other aspects of the learning behavior (0.01).

The study revealed that the different dimensions of the emotional quotient can be a contributing factor to enhancing students' learning behavior. This findings in this study support earlier study by Pannitamai (2002) who suggested that children with high emotional quotient are usually good learners, are able to tolerate pressure and stress, optimistic, adaptive to different situations and do not have conflicts with friends and thus are admired and accepted by peers. In addition, emotional quotient was found to be positively related and crucial in promoting students' good learning behavior (Kanthakaew, 2008).

References

Brisbane, H.E. 1994. *The Developing Gleneoe Division Macmillan*. New York: Mcgraw-Hill.

Buriphakdi, C. 1983. *Fathers in the Thai Society*. Bangkok: Si Nakkharintrawirot University.

Chan-em, S. 1981. *Child Psychology*. 2nd printing. Bangkok: Aksonbandit, Ltd. Part.

Goleman, D. 1998. *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Bantam Book.

Good, Carter. V. 1973. *Dictionary of Education.* 3ed .New York:McGraw-Hill.

Corsini, Raymond J. 2002. *The Dictionary of Psychology*. New York: Brunner/ Routledge.

Holt, S. (2007). *Emotional intelligence and academic achievement in higher education*. Pepperdine University.

Kaewkangwan. (2002). *Developmental psychology for all ages (8th ed.)*. Bangkok: Thammasat University Press.

Kanthakaew, W. 2008. *Adversity Quotient, Emotional Quotient and learning behavior of students in level 4, Narirat School, Phrae Province*. Bangkok: Kasetsat University.

Khosla, M., & Dokania, V. (2010). *Does Happiness Promote Emotional Intelligence*? Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology, 36(1), 45-54.

Laophet, Y. 2001. *Roles of fathers, roles of mothers and Emotion Quotient of adolescent students in Bangkok*. M.Ed. Thesis in Developmental Psychology. Bangkok: Si Nakkharintrawirot University.

Ministry of Education. (1999). *National education act of BE 2542 (1999)*. Bangkok: Office of the National Education Commission.

Nonis, S. A., & Hudson, G. I. (2010). *Performance of college students: Impact of study time and study habits*. Journal of Education for Business, 85(4), 229-238.

Pannitamai (2002). *Emotional intelligence (EQ): Indices of happiness and success in life*. 5th edition Bangkok , Expernet.

Romruen, W. 2006. *Relationship between submissive behavior and learning behavior of higher secondary school students at Triam Udonsuksa Phatthanakan, Bang Yai, Nonthaburi*. MSc. Thesis in Community Psychology. Bangkok: Kasetsat University.

Sangnapaboworn, W. (2003). *Higher education reform in Thailand: towards quality improvement and university autonomy*. Paper presented at the Shizuoka forum on approaches to higher education, intellectual creativity, cultivation of human resources seen in Asian countries.

Su-amphan, A. 1993. *How to raise an only child without a problem*. Bangkok: Plan Publishing.

Sugarathemi. (2000). *Alternative A comparative study of intelligence quotient and emotional quotient of successful engineers, teachers, nurses, singers and monks*.

Taro, Y. 1973. *Statistics: an introductory analysis*: New York: Harper and Row.

Tham-amnuaysuk. (1998). *Variables involving learning stress of the secondary school students at* Suphanburi Sports School, Physical Education Department. M.Ed. Thesis in Developmental Psychology. Bangkok: Si Nakkharinwirot University.