

## Research Work

# The Linkage between Emotional Intelligence and Self-Resilience among International Students in Business Program at a Selected Public University in Thailand

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### Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-resilience among international students in business program at a selected public university. A self-administrated questionnaire was distributed to thirty-seven international students who registered in “Principles of Management” course on the Google classroom. Only nineteen questionnaires were returned with completion. Analysis of Pearson correlation revealed the positive association between emotional intelligence and self-resilience at a medium level ( $r = .526, p < .05$ ). Discussions and recommendations for further studies were also discussed.

**Keywords:** Emotional intelligence, Self-resilience, International students, Business program

### Introduction

In the past two decades, research on emotional intelligence has widely been paid more attentions and interests leading to the exploration of various benefits of emotional intelligence for individuals (Daft, 2011). Resilience mostly defined as a capability of individuals to positively adapt and develop while being in a confrontation with adversity has long been studied more than 40 years and continued to be more popular to study with a focus on relationships to other psychological and physiological variables in a recent year (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008). Previous research indicated that emotional intelligence had a strong connection to individual advancement and performance in an organization. Besides, emotional intelligence is also viewed as a precursor to resilience (Magnano, Craparo, & Paolillo, 2016). Prior studies demonstrated the relationship between emotional intelligence and resiliency, and their significant

influence on interpersonal relationships, life success, stress management, well-being, and performance improvement (Jayalakshmi & Magdalin, 2015).

Even though numerous research explored the relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience in various contexts, research on this topic has been very little and scarce. Lack of research interest in this area in Thailand reflects the need of emphasis to assess whether the findings are to be similar or different from other environmental settings. Therefore, the main objective of this present study was to address the gap of research in scrutinizing the association between emotional intelligence and self-resilience in international student in business program in Thailand.

## Literature Reviews

### *Emotional Intelligence*

Salovey and Mayer (1990) coined the term of emotional intelligence as “the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and action” (p.189). Goleman (1995) also defined the similar definition of emotional intelligence as the ability to recognize, understand, and control one’s emotional and recognize, understand, and influence other’s emotion. In his famous book entitled “Emotional Intelligence”, EQ has been described by five essential components including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Goleman (2001) later condensed these five components to four components and proposed the new model of emotional intelligence in his work “Emotional Intelligence: Perspectives on a Theory of Performance.” These four basic components include:

1. Self-awareness – the fundamental components for the rest, which an individual must be aware of his/her feeling. Individuals with a high degree of self-awareness can accurately evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, and have a strong sense of self-confidence.
2. Self-management – the ability to manage disruptive feelings and balance one’s emotions to prevent oneself from the effect of worry, anxiety, fear or anger on their thinking. This ability is essential for achieving a long-term goal.
3. Social awareness – the ability to understand others’ emotions and feelings, and utilize one’s empathy to acknowledge what others are feeling without being told. Empathy usually refers to the statement “put yourself in someone else’s shoes.” Individuals who have a healthy social awareness tend to understand different perspectives and deal with people more effectively.
4. Relationship management – the ability to work with other people, establish positive connections with them, respond to others’ feelings effectively, and influence others to do something. Individuals with this ability know how to communicate with others, and treat others with respect.

In this study, the researcher used these four components of emotional intelligence proposed by Goleman (2001) to assess emotional intelligence of international students in business program.

### *Resilience*

Resilience reflects the ability of some individuals who recover more quickly than others after experiencing a stressful life situation or a severely disadvantage circumstance (Sarrionandia, Ramos-Díaz, & Fernández-Lasarte, 2018). Resilience has been typically defined as constructive adjustment while being in a face of adversity (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008). Resilience is considered as a dynamic process that individuals demonstrate as a positive adaption to cope with adversity. Early research on resilience has placed an emphasis on two fields, which are traumatology (adult-oriented) and developmental psychology (children-oriented). The focus on adults’ resiliency attempted to explore factors that helped individuals avoid stressful situations while resilience research on developmental psychology tended to identify individual qualities that separate children who had positive development and adaption despite disadvantage circumstances (socioeconomic status and challenging home conditions) from those who came up with negative consequences (Graber, Pichon, & Carabine, 2015). Resilience has numerous beneficial aspects to individuals including preventing individuals from pain and psychological problems, protecting individuals against effect of stressful events (Sogolittappheh, Hedayat, Arjmand, & Khaledian, 2018)

### *Emotional Intelligence and Resilience*

Javadi and Parv (2009) investigated the association between emotional intelligence and resilience in students at university of social welfare science and rehabilitation in Iran. This study used Modified Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (MSEIS) and Cooner-Davidson Resilience Scale (CDRIS) to measure the two variables. Pearson correlation and multiple regressions analyses were conducted to test the relationship between these two variables. Results of this study found significant connection among emotional intelligence factors and resilience. This led to the conclusion that the higher emotional intelligence, the more resilient students are when confronting with adversity.

Garg and Rastogi (2009) explored the correlation between emotional intelligence and stress resiliency among students. A total of 140 students participated in data collection through the use of a survey questionnaire. A 34-item of Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Hyde, Pethe and Dhar in 2002 was used to assess ten components of emotional intelligence among students. For stress-resilience, the Stress Resiliency Profile (SRP)

created by Thomas and Tymon in 1995 was utilized to identify three key components of stress resiliency among students. Findings showed that students who were emotionally intelligent were more likely to be resilient to stress leading to personal and profession success. This research suggested that students needed to be developed emotion intelligence and resiliency through a variety of educational activities and programs.

Sogolittapeh, Hedayat, Arjmand, and Khaledian (2018) examined the linkage between spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence with resilience in undergraduate students in Iran. One hundred students were distributed a questionnaire for data collection. To measure emotional intelligence and resilience of students, 90-item of Bar-on's Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire and Conner and Davidson resilience questionnaire were used. Analysis of Pearson correlation and multiple regressions indicated a significant positive relationship between spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence and resilience, and a significant positive association between emotional intelligence and resilience was found.

Based on findings of previous research, this present study proposed the research hypothesis as *“there were a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and resilience among international students in business program at a select public university.”*

**Methodology**

This study was an exploratory study. A total of nineteen students in international business program at a selected public university was a participant in this study. Out of thirty seven students who registered in ‘Principles of Management’ course, only nineteen of them agreed to participate in this study. A self-administrated questionnaire was used for data collection. A survey questionnaire consisted of three parts including general information of respondents (gender, year of study, and nationality), self-assessment of emotional intelligence, and self-resilience. Emotional intelligence was measured based on an 8-item self-test of emotional intelligence proposed by Daft (2011), which a respondent needed to indicate level of agreement with each statement by using a 5-point scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Self-resilience was measured by a 10-item of ‘how resilient are you’ questionnaire proposed by Greenberg (2011), which a participant needed to designate how often he/she did what was indicated in each statement by using a 5-point scale

ranging from 1=never to 5= always. This questionnaire was designed to help participants discover their emotional intelligence and resilience. To ensure internal consistency of the scale measurement, reliability with Cronbach’s alpha test was run. Alpha scores of 0.70 for both scales deemed acceptable, according to Nunnally (1978). To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-resilience of participants, Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was conducted.

**Results**

According to analysis of general information, the majority of participants in this study were female (63.2%). More than a half of participants who completed a questionnaire were a second year student (52.6%). Among 19 students who agreed to participate in this study, 63.2 percent were Bhutanese, 21.1 percent were Chinese, and 15.8 percent were Thai.

Table 1 demonstrated mean scores and standard deviation of emotional intelligence and self-resilience. A total mean score of emotional intelligence was 3.56 while the mean score of self-resilience was 3.10. Among four components of emotional intelligence, social awareness had the highest mean score (M = 3.73, S.D. = .839) following by self-awareness (M = 3.71, S.D. = .673), self-management (M = 3.47, S.D. = .564), and relationship management (M = 3.31, S.D. = .514), respectively.

**Table 1:** Mean and Standard Deviation of Emotional Intelligence and Self-Resilience (n=19)

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Self-Awareness	3.71	.673
Self-Management	3.47	.564
Social Awareness	3.73	.839
Relationship Management	3.31	.650
Emotional Intelligence	3.56	.400
Self-Resilience	3.10	.514

Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed to scrutinize the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-resilience among international students in business program at a selected public university. Table 2 showed the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable. The results found a medium positive correlation between emotional intelligence

and self-resilience ( $r = .526, p < .05$ ). To consider each component of emotional intelligence, findings demonstrated a low positive association between self-awareness and self-resilience ( $r = .456, p <$

$.05$ ), and a medium positive relationship between relationship management and self-resilience ( $r = .582, p < .01$ ).

**Table 2:** Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Self-Resilience

		Self-Resilience
<b>Self-Awareness</b>	Pearson Correlation	.456*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.045
	N	19
<b>Self-Management</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.086
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.726
	N	19
<b>Social Awareness</b>	Pearson Correlation	.238
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.326
	N	19
<b>Relationship Management</b>	Pearson Correlation	.582**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009
	N	19
<b>Emotional Intelligence</b>	Pearson Correlation	.526*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021
	N	19

\*Significant at 0.05 level, \*\*significant at 0.01 level

**Conclusion, Discussions, and Recommendations**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-resilience among international students in business program at a selected public university. Results of this study were consistent with previous studies in which association between emotional intelligence and resilience was discovered (Javadi & Parv, 2009; Garg & Rastogi; 2009; Sarrionandia, Ramos-Díaz, & Fernández-Lasarte, 2018; Sogolitappeh, Hedayat, Arjmand, & Khaledian, 2018). However, this study enhanced the body of knowledge in this field by exploring positive significant relationships between two components of emotional intelligence (self-awareness and relationship management) and resilience. Individuals who were aware of their emotion and feeling tend to be able to constructively alter despite adversity. In addition, people who could get along with other people and understand how to deal with them were more likely to be resilient.

The findings of this current study can be concluded that the more emotional intelligence international students had, the more likely they were to be resilient to adversity. Thus, the international business program needs to provide

sufficient emotional activities and programs that help increase international students’ emotional intelligence. Results showed that the more students were emotionally intelligent, the more resilient they were. To ensure students’ academic success, emotional intelligence initiates and activities should be developed and delivered as part of related courses or external academic activities during the weekend or school breaks. Head of the international business program and all faculty members need to take this into consideration when developing or alternating the curriculum. As studying in an international business program required numerous skills for success and survival, management team needs to be awareness of key factors that can help students be able to positively adapt and develop their behaviors to deal with stressful situations.

This study has some limitations. First of all, the sample size of this study was undersized, which needs to be extended in a future study. Also, two scale measurements used in this present study were not recognized internationally and widely used in previous research, which might cause the trustworthiness in validity and reliability of these scales. Thus, the next study should utilize the standardized scale measurements to assess the relationship between these two variables. As this study examined only association between

emotional intelligence and resilience, it cannot be described causation of these two variables due to the sample size conditions. Thus, a further research should maximize sample size and conduct regression analysis to predict whether or not emotional intelligence is an antecedent variable of resiliency. Studying relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience in other programs in the same or different educational institutes is also recommended for a future research.

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