THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHY, EMOTIONAL QUOTIENT (EQ) COMPETENCIES, COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF DHURAKIJ PUNDIT UNIVERSITY'S STUDENTS

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Abstract

With regard to the upcoming ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), the quality of university students and graduates is one the most important aspects that should be focused.

The researcher is interested in emotional quotient and communication skill competencies as the possible foundations for students' achievements. Based on literature, these two aspects have been used as drivers of leadership and personal excellence which are vital for students' achievements and are in accordance with the vision of the president of Dhurakij Pundit University (DPU).

The research findings revealed that students with higher emotional quotient competencies are likely to perform better in terms of their achievements. Moreover, it was indicated that demographic profiles and communication skill competencies have an effects on the achievements of Dhurakij Pundit University students.

The findings of this study can be used as a guideline to develop an appropriate emotional quotient campaign or related approaches in order to increase the achievements of university students in the future.

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Introduction and Investigating Constructs

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Varakorn Samakoses, president of Dhurakij Pundit University (DPU), once stated that, "Success factors that led Dhurakij Pundit University (DPU) to the top private universities in Thailand accepted by Thai and international students for 45 years are the determination to continuously improve education quality standards."

This statement is supported by many outstanding awards, for example, the excellent Education Quality Standard Award from Office of the Higher Education Commission.

Regarding the preparation for the upcoming ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), DPU has adjusted its image to a 'progressive university' by leveling up all parts of the university, for example, the new logo that represents infinite opportunities DPU offers to all students and staff, the brand new education programs and many more.

Furthermore, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Varakorn Samakoses (2013) concluded his statement in DPU news that in order to deal with the upcoming dynamic changes, students and all who are related to the Thai education system should have the capability to adapt to changes.

This is when emotional quotient (EQ) can be applied as a success factor to reach the goal of a progressive university by encouraging students to have new attitudes and new mindsets towards the rapidly changing world. According to Talentsmart (2014), when emotional intelligence was first identified in 1995, it served as the missing link in a peculiar finding: people with average IQs outperform those with the highest IQs 70% of the time. This anomaly threw a massive wrench into what many people had always assumed was the sole source of success—IQ. Decades of research now point to emotional intelligence as the critical factor that sets star performers apart from the rest of the pack.

Emotional intelligence can generally be described as the abilities of understanding and skill in developing relationships. People possessing high emotional

intelligence are observed when they demonstrate "competencies that constitute self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills at appropriate times and ways sufficient to be effective in the situation" (Goldman, Boyatzis, &McKee, 2002, p.3).

Furthermore, emotional intelligence can also be described as the foundation for a host of critical skills. It impacts almost everything you say and do each day. Emotional intelligence is the single biggest predictor of performance in the workplace and the strongest driver of leadership and personal excellence (Talentsmart, 2014).

The emotional quotient competencies test is an evaluation of several aspects of one's emotional intelligence as suggested above. The researcher will employ an emotional quotient measuring standard from the University of Washington, which measured five main aspects; self-awareness, managing emotions, motivation oneself, empathy, and social skill (Weisinger, 1998).

In addition, communication skills also play an important role in coping with future international issues, ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). According to Mikoluk (2013), communication is the key to maintaining successful business relations. For this reason, it is paramount that professionals working in business environments have first-class communication skills. There are three basic types of communication: verbal, non-verbal, and written. However, only verbal and nonverbal communication will be used in this report.

Verbal or oral communication uses spoken words to communicate a message. When most people think of verbal communication, they think of speaking, but listening is an equally important skill for this type of communication to be successful. Verbal communication is applicable to a wide range of situations, ranging from informal office discussions to public speeches made to thousands of people (Mikoluk, 2013).
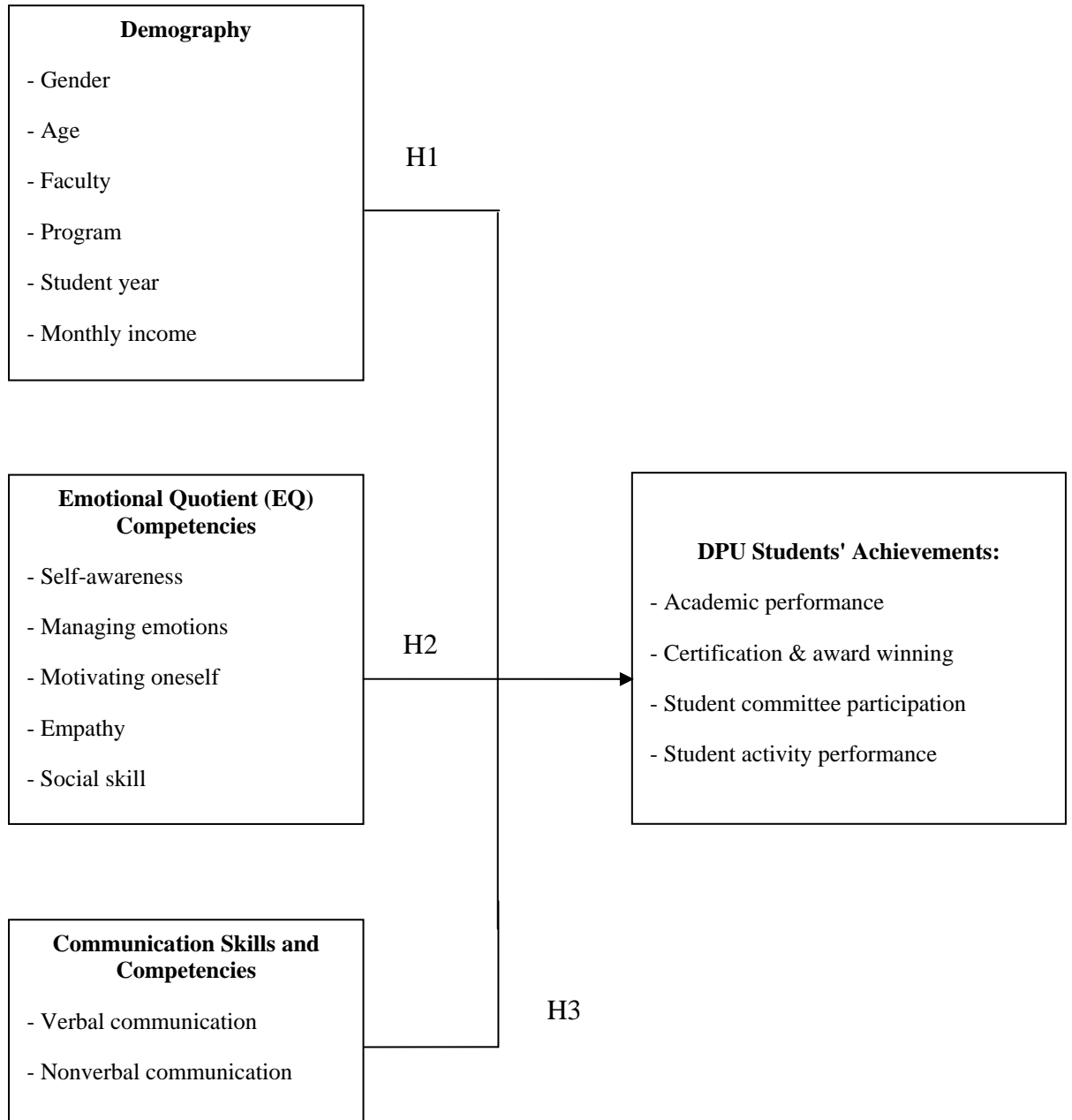
Non-verbal communication includes body language, gestures, facial expressions, and even posture. Non-verbal communication sets the tone of a conversation, and can seriously undermine the message contained in your words if

you are not careful to control it. For example, slouching and shrinking back in your chair during a business meeting can make you seem under-confident, which may lead people to doubt the strength of your verbal contributions. In contrast, leaning over an employee's desk and invading his or her personal space can turn a friendly chat into an aggressive confrontation that leaves the employee feeling victimized and undervalued (Mikoluk, 2013).

The findings of this study can provide baseline information of situation and trend analysis of DPU students toward the 'progressive university', the vision of the president of Dhurakij Pundit University, which could possibly lead to extra EQ courses, EQ management institution, or EQ marketing campaign for DPU students.

Therefore, this research aims to investigate the achievement of Dhurakij Pundit University's students and the possible influencing factors such as demographic profiles, emotional quotient (EQ) competencies (e.g. self-awareness and social skills) and communication skills (e.g. verbal communication and nonverbal communication). A conceptual framework of this study was depicted as in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Demography
- Gender
- Age
- Faculty
- Program
- Student year
- Monthly income

H1

Emotional Quotient (EQ) Competencies
- Self-awareness
- Managing emotions
- Motivating oneself
- Empathy
- Social skill

H2

DPU Students' Achievements:
- Academic performance
- Certification & award winning
- Student committee participation
- Student activity performance

Communication Skills and Competencies
- Verbal communication
- Nonverbal communication

H3

Based on the above research questions and a conceptual framework, the hypotheses of the study are as follows:

H1: There is a relationship between demographic profiles and the achievements of DPU students.

H2: There is a relationship between emotional quotient (EQ) competencies and the achievements of DPU students.

H3: There is a relationship between communication skills and the achievement of DPU students.

Research Methodology

This study address the relationship between demography, emotional quotient (EQ) competencies, communication skills and the achievement of Dhurakij Pundit University's students using the following constructs:

1. Demographic: gender, age, faculty, program, student year and monthly income
2. Emotional quotient competencies: self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy and social skill
3. Communication skills and competencies: verbal communication and nonverbal communication
4. Students' achievements: academic performance, certification & award winning, student committee participation and student activity performance

The study aims to collect students' achievements data while respondents are studying in the Dhurakij Pundit University. Thus, first and second year students aren't within the scope of the study. Therefore, the populations of the study are 3rd and 4th year's students in all faculties of DPU. Samples of the study are representative of the 3rd and 4th year students in the top 3 largest DPU faculties in student numbers (Business Administration, Communication Arts and Arts), DPU International College (DPUIC), and CAIC (Chinese International College). Due to the limitation of time of the study, the researcher will collect a reasonable amount of respondent as a data for calculating and analyzing. Therefore, the researcher needed to collect at least 100 respondents' data as a sample size.

The research adopted quota sampling method by giving out questionnaire to 3rd and 4th students who are from the top 3 largest DPU faculties in student numbers

(Business Administration, Communication Arts and Arts), DPU International College (DPUIC), and CAIC (Chinese International College). Quota sampling was used for this study because the respondents can be controlled for certain characteristics (Malhotra 2007).

Table 1: Quota sampling method

Student Year	Faculty				
	BA	Com Art	Arts	DPUIC	CAIC
3rd	10	10	10	10	10
4th	10	10	10	10	10
Number of students	20	20	20	20	20
Total	100 students				

In order to measure the constructs of the study, the research uses the following items in each questionnaire section; Part I: respondents demographic profile including gender, age, faculty, program, student year and monthly income; Part II: EQ competencies consist of five key items which are self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy and social skills; Part III: communication skills and competencies including verbal and nonverbal communication; and Part IV: students' achievements such as academic performance, certification & award winning, student committee participation and student activity performance.

120 questionnaires were actually received. The data was screened for normal distribution which could be assumed for the Skewness value range of -1 to +1 and the Kurtosis value range of -2 to +2 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). 20 sets of questionnaires were found to violate this assumption, so they were excluded from the analysis. Therefore, 100 respondents remained for the data analysis.

Data Analysis

Each construct was analyzed by using descriptive statistic methods such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation to find descriptive results. The

hypothesis test was conducted by using the chi-square test (X^2 test) and correlation analysis.

Research Findings

The process of data screening showed that it was the symmetrical distribution of the collected data. Next, the process of analysis would be focused on the factors influencing on students' achievements in Dhurakij Pundit University.

Results of Demographic Profile

The majority of respondents' gender were female (56%), followed by male (44%). the majority of respondents were 20-22 years old (92.0%) followed by 23-27 years old (8%). The respondents were equally selected from each faculty, therefore Business Administration (20%), Communication Arts (20%), Arts (20%), DPUIC (20%) and CAIC (20%). Some respondents in the same faculty were from different programs but all respondents were from day programs (100%). The respondents were equally selected from each year, therefore 3rd year students (50%) 4th year students (50%). The majority of respondents had income between 6,000 – 10,000 baht per month (36%) followed by less than 6,000 baht per month (28%) 10,001, -15,000 baht per month (23%) 15,001 – 20,000 baht per month (6%) over 25,000 baht per month (5%) and 20,001 – 25,000 baht per month (2%)

Result of Emotional Quotient (EQ) Measurement

According to the emotional quotient measuring standard from the University of Washington, participants will be divided into 3 categories based on their EQ scores which are high abilities (3), moderate abilities (2) and low abilities (1). It was found that the majority of the respondents had moderate self-awareness abilities (mean = 2.20). The majority of the respondents had moderate managing emotions abilities (mean = 2.18). The majority of the respondents had moderate self-motivation abilities (mean = 2.17). The majority of the respondents had moderate empathy abilities (mean

= 2.28). The majority of the respondents had moderate social skill abilities (mean = 2.30).

Result of Communication Skills and Competencies

The majority of respondents are able to speak 2 languages (42.0%), followed by respondents who can speak 3 languages (28.0%), 22% of respondents can speak only their native language and just 1% of respondents can speak the most languages which is 6 languages. The numbers of respondents who had taken public speaking courses and who had never taken one are about the same which is 52% (yes) and 48% (no) respectively. The majority of respondents chose to study only 1 non-native language which was mainly English (72.0%). Only some respondents applied for other non-native courses such as Chinese and Japanese (21.0% and 7.0%). The majority of respondents did not take any course related to body language (73.0%). The majority of respondents took personal development training (75.0%) due to the university policy which encourages students to apply for career preparation courses. The numbers of respondents are distributed nearly equally in each choice, which is 55% (yes) and 45% (no).

Result of Students' Achievements

The majority of respondents had a cumulative GPA between 2.51 and 3.00 (30.0%) followed by 2.01 – 2.50 (27.0%) 3.01 – 3.50 (21.0%) 3.51 – 4.00 (12.0%) and less than 2.00 (10.0%). The majority of respondents participated in two DPU activities (39.0%) followed by at least 1 activity (34.0%) did not participate any (13.0%) 3 activities (11.0%) and 5 activities (3.0%). The majority of respondents did not receive any award or certification from DPU activities (74.0%). The majority of respondents did not participate in any activity arranged by an external organization (64.0%) and 32.0% of respondents participate in at least one activity arranged by an external organization. The majority of respondents did not receive any award or certification from an external organization (91.0%) because most respondents did not participate in any activity arranged by an external organization.

Result of Hypothesis Tests

H1: There is a relationship between demographic profiles and the achievements of DPU students.

The study found that there was a partial support for the relationship between demographic profiles and the achievements of DPU students. The majority of female respondents (83.9%) tended to not receive any award or certification, whereas male respondents had slightly better chance of receiving award or certification (38.6%). Surprisingly, students from Business Administration faculty had the lowest average GPA and international faculties such as DPU international college and Chinese college tended to have the highest average GPA. Moreover, respondents form these international faculties tent to participate more in activities arranged by external organization. Respondents with income less than 20,000 baht per month tent to participate more in DPU activities but respondents with income higher than 20,00 baht tended to participate more in activities arranged by external organization.

H2: There is a relationship between emotional quotient (EQ) competencies and the achievements of DPU students.

The study found that there was a partial support for the relationship between emotional quotient (EQ) and the achievements of DPU students. Respondents with higher EQ scores in term of self-awareness, self-motivation and empathy skills tended to have higher GPA. Moreover, respondents with better empathy and social skills tended to participate more in DPU activities and respondents with extra self-motivating skills also had a better chance in receiving award or certification.

H3: There is a relationship between communication skills and the achievement of DPU students.

The study found a full support for the relationship between communication skills and the achievements of DPU students. Respondents with higher verbal communication skills in term numbers of languages respondent can speak tended to get higher GPA, higher participation rate and higher chance of award winning and certification. Besides, respondents who took public speaking courses tended to have a

higher participation rate in external organization activities. Surprisingly, respondents who studied one foreign language course tended to participate more in external organization activities, whereas respondents who studied more than 1 foreign language courses had lower participation rate. Moreover, respondents with higher nonverbal communication skills tended to have a higher participation rate in activities in DPU and from external organization. Beside, these respondents also had a higher chance in receiving award winning or certification especially from DPU.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aims to identify the factors affecting the achievements of Dhurakij Pundit University students and to determine the relationships between different demographic profiles, emotional quotient competencies, communication skill competencies on student achievements at DPU.

The study has found a significant relationship from the demographic profiles of Dhurakij Pundit University students. The study revealed that gender has effects on different university performance in terms of award winning or certification from internal university activities. The result implies that male and female students tend to show different performance (award winning or certification) when participating in activities in the university.

The study has found a significant relationship between demographic profiles, such as student faculty and average monthly income, and student performances, such as cumulative GPA and activity participation. The study revealed that students with different faculty and monthly income have different university performance in terms of student GPA and activity participation both inside and outside the university. The result implies that students with different demographic profiles (faculty and monthly income) tend to show different activity participation behavior (university activities and external organization activities) and get different results in terms of cumulative GPA.

As for the emotional quotient competencies, the study revealed that 4 out of 5 emotional quotient competencies from the University of Washington have an effect

on Dhurakij Pundit University students' performances. This relates to Barent (2005), Reed (2004) and Bipath (2008) whose studies were focused on the relationship between emotional intelligence and the effectiveness rating of students, the impact of emotional intelligence and leadership behavior. Such a consistent result implies that emotional quotient competencies have an effect on students' performance in terms of cumulative GPA, activity participation (in DPU) and award winning or certification (outside DPU).

Lastly, in term of communication skill competencies, the study revealed that communication skills (both verbal and nonverbal communication) have an effect on overall student performance (e.g. cumulative GPA, award winning or certification). The results were in line with the studies of Sagie (1996) and Johlke (2001). They found that communication helps enhance group performance, produce higher level of productivity and task accomplishment. Such a consistent result implies that communication skill competencies have an effect on student performance in terms of cumulative GPA, activity participation (both inside and outside DPU) and award winning or certification (both inside and outside DPU).

Implication of the Study

From the study, the majority of respondents who have higher emotional quotient scores likely to have better academic performance, whereas respondents with lower emotional quotient scores will get worse results. This outcome may lead to a consideration of an overall academic improvement by using emotional quotient as a tool, for example, adding emotional quotient competencies workshops or adding emotional quotient related courses as an elective course.

Moreover, respondents with higher abilities in terms of self-motivation, empathy and social skills tended to participate in more activities both inside and outside DPU. Moreover, most respondents with higher emotional quotient scores are likely to win an award or certification. Therefore, the university may encourage students to gain more of these abilities in order to create a dynamic atmosphere throughout the university.

Besides, respondents with higher communication skills, for example those can speak more languages or have some training in communication skills, are likely to participate more in activities, particularly in academic events, arranged by external organizations. Thus, it is possibly a better choice to pick those students who have better communication skills to play a bigger part both inside and outside the university, for example, by encouraging them to join student committees or to be a representative of a faculty or even the university.

Recommendation for Future Study

The future study may replicate this study and increase the sample size to help increase the accuracy and explanatory power of the findings. Future research may be conducted through a qualitative approach to collect data from students, or qualitative and quantitative approaches could be employed to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between emotional quotient competencies and academic achievement which may be useful for further research in creating an emotional quotient campaign in the university. In terms of student achievements, future study may include a section which asks the opinion of respondents about what activities they are interested in the most, such as academic, recreation or community service activities in order to gain a better understanding of the relationship between emotional quotient competencies and student attitudes.

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