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EFFECTIVENESS OF EMOTIONAL COMPETENCY MODULE ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND AUTOMATIC NEGATIVE THOUGHTS AMONG ADOLESCENTS



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PAVITHRAH A/P JAYA KUMAR

**UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS
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**EFFECTIVENESS OF EMOTIONAL COMPETENCY MODULE ON
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND AUTOMATIC NEGATIVE
THOUGHTS AMONG ADOLESCENTS**

PAVITHRAH A/P JAYA KUMAR

**THESIS PRESENTED TO QUALIFY FOR A MASTERS IN SCIENCE
(RESEARCH MODE)**

**FACULTY OF HUMAN EDUCATION
UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS
2022**

APPRECIATION

This journey has been long and by far the most difficult as it happened in the most pivotal moments of my life. Many had to encourage and motivate me to help me get through the tough times. First would my mother, Leela Devi and my father Jaya Kumar. Then comes my supervisor, Dr Asma Perveen who was incredibly patient yet also persisted to always ensure I completed the journey in my Masters Degree well.



ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menguji kebolehesanan latihan modul kompetensi emosi dalam meningkatkan kecerdasan emosi dan mengurangkan pemikiran negatif automatik. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah eksperimen kuasi termasuk reka bentuk ujian pra dan pasca dan kumpulan kawalan digunakan di mana 58 peserta dipilih menggunakan pelbagai peringkat yang melibatkan teknik persampelan bertujuan, mudah dan berstrata; 32 peserta terlibat di dalam kumpulan eksperimen manakala terdapat 26 peserta di dalam kumpulan kawalan. Skor pos ujian menunjukkan bahawa skor kecerdasan emosi kumpulan eksperimen ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.43$) adalah lebih tinggi berbanding kumpulan kawalan ($M = 2.20$, $SD = 0.58$), $t(56) = 5.87$, $p < .05$. Selain itu, terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan dalam skor kecerdasan emosi antara skor pra ujian ($M = 2.36$, $SD = 0.35$) dan pos ujian ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.43$); $t(31) = -6.02$, $p = 0.00$ kumpulan eksperimen. Sementara itu, tidak ada perbezaan yang signifikan dalam skor pemikiran negatif automatik antara kumpulan eksperimen dan kumpulan kawalan. Walau bagaimanapun, skor pemikiran negatif automatik antara pra ujian ($M = 50.88$, $SD = 0.35$) dan pos ujian ($M = 40.94$, $SD = 18.27$) kumpulan eksperimen adalah signifikan ($t(31) = 3.024$, $p = 0.01$). Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa Modul Kompetensi Emosi bukan hanya berkesan dalam meningkatkan kecerdasan emosi bagi pelajar sekolah menengah tetapi juga berjaya mengurangkan pemikiran negatif automatik dalam kalangan peserta. Modul ini menunjukkan potensi untuk menambah baik pengamalan biasa oleh pihak kaunselor, psikologi dan psikiatri untuk membantu membina strategi rawatan atau intervensi mereka bagi meningkatkan kecekapan emosi dan pemikiran negatif automatic dalam kalangan remaja.





ABSTRACT

The objective of the study is to measure the effect of emotional competency module training on the emotional intelligence and automatic negative thoughts. A quasi-experiment with a pre and post-test design and a control group is used where 58 participants were chosen using convenience sampling; 32 in the experimental group and 26 in the control group. Findings showed that there was a significant difference between the pre and post-test of the experiment group for both overall emotional intelligence scores and automatic negative thoughts. The emotional intelligence post-test scores indicated that the experimental group ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.43$) scored significantly higher than the control group ($M = 2.20$, $SD = 0.58$), $t(56) = 5.87$, $p < .05$. Additionally, there is a significant difference in the emotional intelligence scores between the pre-test ($M = 2.36$, $SD = 0.35$) and post-test ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.43$), $t(31) = -6.02$, $p = 0.00$ scores of the experimental group. An independent-samples t-test indicated that there was no statistical significance between the experimental group ($M = 40.94$, $SD = 18.27$) and the control group ($M = 47.04$, $SD = 13.86$), $t(56) = -1.41$, $p > .05$ in the post-test automatic negative thoughts scores. However, the automatic negative thoughts scores between the pre-test ($M = 50.88$, $SD = 0.35$) and post-test ($M = 40.94$, $SD = 18.27$) of the experimental group was significant ($t(31) = 3.024$, $p = 0.01$). Overall, the results suggest that the Emotional Competency Module was not only effective in enhancing the emotional intelligence for the secondary school students but also succeeded in reducing the automatic negative thoughts by the participants. The module shows potential to improve the usual practices by counsellors, psychologists, and psychiatrists to help with their treatment or intervention strategies in enhancing adolescent's emotional competence and automatic negative thoughts.



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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/SYMBOLS**

Abbreviation/Symbol	Description
ATQ-Malay	Malay version of the Automatic Thoughts Questionnaire
ANOVA	Analysis of variance
CBT	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
CDS	Cognitive Distortions Scale
CFA	Confirmatory factor analysis
EC	Emotional Competency
EFA	Exploratory factor
EQ	Emotional Quotient
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
UKM	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
USM	University Sains Malaysia
USMEQ-i	Universiti Sains Malaysia Emotional Quotient Inventory
F	F-value
M	Mean value
N	Population size
<i>n</i>	Sample size
<i>p</i>	P-value / probability value
SD	Standard deviation
<i>t</i>	T-value



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Adolescents are known to be at risk of developing negative behaviours at their age. Behaviour may be shaped at a younger age, but their rationalization of each behaviour become crucial at the adolescence stage. The important characteristics among adolescents are mostly determined by the way they handle their emotions. Emotions involves both biological and cognitive factors. The brain that is localized for emotion is the limbic system. It is termed as the ‘emotional brain’. Situational factors affect this part of the brain. On the other hand, Brown and Kulik’s (1977) proposed the existence of memories that are formed due to the circumstances that affect emotions showing the one of the factors affecting cognitive processing. Perhaps the most serious disadvantage of emotion is that it can either be positive or negative given the



situation a person goes through. Hence requiring us to create much effective methods to handle emotions well.

This is discussed further in the background of study and the problem statement section in this chapter. Every study has its respective implication whether directly or indirectly. Therefore, the need to conduct this study as well as the significance of the study are mentioned. There is a need to understand the context in which the variables are selected in this study and therefore explained conceptually and operationalized as this chapter progresses. With the provision of a detailed explanation of the variables, the hypotheses for measuring the independent and dependent variables are also explained with link to the topic of the study on emotional intelligence to better understand the enhancement of emotions on faulty thinking patterns as well as the overall emotional intelligence of a person.



1.2 Background of study

Emotional intelligence has certainly been in more focus compared to many decades ago. Back then, emotions generally are thought to be repressive and hinders decision-making in humans. However, it is now proven that emotional intelligence in fact enhances decision-making skills in the workplace (Chauhan & Chauhan, 2007). Over the past few decades, there has been notable recognition and need for emotional intelligence in different areas of life.





Based on the definition by Salovey and Mayer (1990), the article by Petrovici and Dobrescu (2013) list the main features of emotional intelligence as follows:

1. Being aware of own emotions.
2. Capability to manage own emotions in different circumstances.
3. *Self-motivation*.
4. Capability to empathise and understand other people's feelings.
5. Finally, to manage relationships with others/interpersonal relationship.

More parents, teachers and employers are now looking for individuals with high emotional intelligence. Hence, the corporate world has moved on from choosing high intelligence quotient (IQ) to selecting employees with high emotional quotient (EQ). Evidence suggests that EQ is among the most important skills in preparing graduates for the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (Mohd Kamaruzaman, Hamid, Mutalib & Rasul, 2019). Lately, employers give more importance to emotional capabilities. In a study reviewed so far, however, shows the fact that most adolescents scored the least in their intrapersonal management abilities (Saikia, Jinamoni, Anshu & Mathur, 2015) which can be improved by enhancing emotional intelligence.

Malaysia Kini newspaper page reported about a recent research from the University of Michigan in the United States which found that college students today are less empathetic than their counterparts of the past 30 years (Hazlina, 2017). Besides, she also reported that many people see youths today (sometimes called "Generation Me") as one of the most self-centred, competitive, overconfident and individualistic lot compared with other generations (Hazlina, 2017). Hazlina (2017) insists that addressing the decline in empathic skills is essential in fact these empathic skills should be embedded at all levels of society as an effort to reduce bullying in schools, homes, in the internet and in our community.





Adolescents are prone to experience increased negative thoughts which may lead to delinquent and suicidal behaviours. Adolescence as coined by G. Stanley Hall (1904) as the storm and stress period of their lives in an article by Buchanan and Hughes (2014). Negative thoughts or cognitive distortions has been widely studied to cause depression among adolescents (Choon et al., 2015; Rohany Nasir, Ahmad, Yusoooff, & Khairudin, 2010; Rohany Nasir et al., 2016; Teo & Say, 2012). This is an impact of the cognitive processing of the brain. In addition to that, studies show that the emotional and behavioural problems experienced by adolescents relate to broken attitudes and cognitive issues such as negative cognitive errors (Leung & Poon, 2001; Flouri & Panourgia, 2014).

Despite the many studies that identify the impact of the lack of emotional intelligence, several studies suggest solutions for this issue. Ozcan and Zaaroglu (2017) alluded that emotional intelligence can be learnt and improved anytime as scientists have recognized that emotional intelligence is much easily improved compared to intelligence (Goleman, 1999; Shapiro, 2002; Weisinger, 1998). Studies on the human brain reveal that emotional intelligence skills development is easier from birth to the adolescent development phase hence making teaching emotional intelligence crucial when children are still schooling (Ozcan & Zaaroglu, 2017). Moreover, teaching emotional intelligence and positive thinking can help enhance mental health and self-efficacy (Shahbazzadegan, Samadzadeh & Abbasi, 2013). In addition to that, another research based on the broaden-and-build theory found that emotionally intelligence people were more inclined to use positive emotions to overcome negative events in life hence causing them to adapt and function better (Tugade, Fredrickson, Barrett, & Salovey, 2002).



Consequently, this study aims to enhance the emotional competence and the automatic negative thoughts among adolescents using the Emotional Competency Module. The Emotional Competency Module was designed by Perveen et.al (2018) for adolescents. This module activities are based on the four Goleman's emotional competence constructs which are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management (Goleman, 1998).

As such, this research addresses the emotional problems and the automatic negative thoughts faced by adolescents by implementing a new emotional competency module that focuses on the four Goleman's domain which will be discussed further throughout this chapter.

1.3 Problem Statement

There is an urgent need to address the social problems caused by a lack of emotional intelligence among adolescents. According to a research by Hari Krishnan Andi (2012), youths are still considered vulnerable in Malaysian society. The increase in behavioural problems among adolescents has been due to their lack in emotional coping. Syed Muhammad (1993) as cited in Hari Krishnan Andi's (2012) said that youths are probably already in danger of lacking ethical and moral values that are essential for becoming good human beings in this society. The sample population of the study are adolescents aged between 10 to 25 years old. The age range chosen is such because Sawyer et al.'s (2018) research suggests that adolescents age in this era corresponds to youths aged between 10 to 24 years old.



The issue of emotional intelligence has grown in importance in light of the studies done in the past decade. Studies showed that overall emotional intelligence among adolescents in Malaysia was average (Sulaiman, Tanjung & Md Khalid, 2013; Perveen et. al, 2018) in which they scored high in the resilience and social intelligence level but scored average in the emotional awareness and emotional expression levels (Rahman et al., 2009). However, the paper by Veni et al. (2018) discussed that the emotional intelligence of adolescents was lower than adults.

Adolescents lack comprehension of the importance of dealing with their negative emotions to encourage better handling of personal and social emotions. Alpatanni (2015) agreed saying that “*the most prevalent problems affecting adolescents in Malaysia today are emotional*”. Simsek and Serin (2017) and Coetzer (2016) revealed in their studies that emotional intelligence has an impact on negative thoughts among university students.

Sefetullah Kuldass et al. (2015) discussed in their paper about the failure of previous curriculums in the Malaysian education to train the cognitive ability among students who make up to a majority of adolescents in Malaysia. Research also prove that there exist a relationship between cognitive distortions and depression (Blake et al., 2016; Marton et al., 1993; Nyarko & Amissah, 2014; Rohany Nasir et al., 2016; Rohany Nasir et al., 2010) whereas another research showed that cognitive distortions was shown in people who attempted suicide (Jager-Hyman, 2014).

Based on the brief review of previous studies, there is a lack in the experimental studies that investigate the association between emotional intelligence





and automatic negative thoughts among adolescents in Malaysia. Therefore, in addition to testing a new module, this study aims to examine the effect of emotional competency training using the Emotional Competency Module on emotional intelligence level and automatic negative thoughts of adolescents.

1.4 Research Questions

The research question for this study is “Is the implementation of Emotional Competency Module training effective in increasing emotional intelligence and reducing automatic negative thoughts based on the pre and post-test measurement between the emotional intelligence group, automatic negative thoughts group and the



1.5 Research Objectives

Generally, this study aims to examine the effect of the emotional competency training on the emotional intelligence and automatic negative thoughts between the control and experimental groups. Specifically, the research objectives of this study are to compare the:

- a) Pre-test mean difference in emotional intelligence between the experimental and the control group.





- b) Mean difference between the pre-test and post-test in emotional intelligence of experimental group.
- c) Mean difference between pre-test and post-test in emotional intelligence of control group.
- d) Post-test mean difference in emotional intelligence between the experimental and the control group.
- e) Pre-test mean difference in automatic negative thoughts between the experimental and the control group.
- f) Mean difference between the pre-test and post-test in automatic negative thoughts of experimental group.
- g) Mean difference between pre-test and post-test in automatic negative thoughts of control group.
- h) Post-test mean difference in automatic negative thoughts between the experimental and the control group.

1.6 Significance of study

This research will provide a better understanding for psychologists and counsellors regarding the emotional competency and its effect on emotional intelligence and negative thoughts. There are not many experimental researches done that have shown the relationship between emotional competency, emotional intelligence and negative thoughts. Many previous researches only show the connection between automatic negative thoughts and depression and other mental health well-being studies (Choon et. al., 2015; Rohany Nasir et. al., 2010; Rohany





Nasir et. al., 2016; Nyarko & Amissah, 2014). Hence, this study will provide an insight on how emotions also play an important role in dealing with automatic negative thoughts.

The study will help discover a new method to dealing with automatic negative thoughts which in turn will reduce the likelihood of adolescents developing depression later in life. The EC Module is a comprehensive module developed to train emotional competence among adolescence. Hence, the EC Module's effectiveness in improving a person's emotional intelligence and automatic negative thoughts can be determined through this study.

Besides, this study will help adolescents build their emotional competency indirectly improving their studies and work-related skills. Previous researches done show a relationship between emotional intelligence and happiness (Tugade et al., 2002), academic achievement (Maizatul Akmal Mohd, Norhaslinda, & Norhafizah, 2013), social relationships (Sheykhjan, Jabari, & K., 2014) and overall well-being (Roxana Dev & Amir Rifaat, 2016). Hence, this study will benefit adolescents in terms of improving their overall well-being which will greatly benefit their life and future.

1.7 Definition of Variables

There are two variables that were tested in this study. The independent variable in this study is the Emotional Competency Module training. Meanwhile, the dependent





variable is the overall emotional intelligence level and the presence of automatic negative thoughts. This experiment will find out the effectiveness of the Emotional Competence Module in enhancing negative thoughts and the level of emotional intelligence present among adolescents. The conceptual and the operational definitions for the variables are discussed further.

Emotional competence and emotional intelligence are somehow similar but different in terminologies. Emotional competence model was first introduced by Daniel Goleman (Vaida & Opre, 2014; Goleman, 1998).

The operational definition is used to define the meaning of the terms in this research using the operations involved in measuring the terms. Based on the theories described for each variable, the instruments used to measure the emotional intelligence and the negative thoughts are explained next.

1.7.1 Independent Variable

1.7.1.1 Conceptual Definition of Emotional Competence

The independent variable in this study is the Emotional Competency Module training. Emotional intelligence means the capability of a person in being aware and managing their emotions in different situations well. A person with good emotional intelligence can manage their own emotions as well as when with others. Daniel Goleman (1995) says that a person who can manage their behaviours, face changes, can solve problems, capable of building good relationships with others during worrying



situations and can communicate with others are those with high emotional intelligence. Goleman (1996) says that emotional intelligence increases with age and can be learned. Goleman's (1998) emotional competency framework consisted of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management (Punia, Dutta and Sharma, 2015). Table 1.1 shows the Goleman's (2001) emotional competency framework.

Table 1.1

Branches of Goleman's Emotional Competency Framework (2001)

Main Concept	Sub-concept
Self-awareness	Emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence
Self-management	Self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, achievement drive and initiative.
Social Awareness	Empathy, service orientation and organizational awareness
Relationship management	Developing others, influence, communication, conflict management, leadership, change catalyst, building bonds, teamwork and collaboration.

Goleman's emotional competency theory is relevant in this study as the Emotional Competency Module was developed based on the four Goleman domains. Hence, this theory will help explain the emotional competencies that the participants will be obtaining in this study as well as the level of emotional intelligence of the participants.

1.7.2 Dependent Variables

There are two dependent variables in this study. One is the emotional intelligence level and the second variable is automatic negative thoughts.



1.7.2.1 Conceptual Definition of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence refers to the capability to be aware and to handle emotions effectively in daily life. Emotion competency is a new term used by (Goleman, 2001). The four constructs of emotional competence are vital to a person's emotional development. In fact, according to Goleman (2001), each construct focuses on the development of parts of the brain that perform the specific functions. Hence, emotional intelligence became an important topic in psychology and human behaviour. The cognition and the emotions work together to form behaviours.

Although the first ones to explore emotional intelligence were Peter Salovey and John Mayer who published their landmark article 'Emotional Intelligence' in the *Imagination, Cognition and Personality Journal*, Goleman popularized the EI concept in his book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More Than IQ?* in 1995 which opened doors to emotional intelligence exploration. Salovey and Mayer initially proposed emotional intelligence as a part of social intelligence. Later on, found the many dimensions of emotional intelligence. Meanwhile, Goleman stressed on the importance of emotional intelligence in the workplace and the role it played in career success compared to cognitive intelligence.

Goleman initially proposed five constructs of emotional intelligence which were self-awareness, the management of one's emotions, motivating other's emotions, empathy, and staying connected (Goleman, 1998) as cited by Faltas (2016). Then, with further exploration, Goleman finally uncovered the four main domains of emotional competence which were self-awareness, self-management, social





awareness and relationship management. A study by Richard Boyatzis saw the collapsing of twenty-five competencies into twenty, and five domains became four: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, and Relationship Management (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 2000). The motivation domain was inclusive in the self-management domain (Goleman, 2001).

The self-awareness cluster is an important part to help understand self-emotions and the reasons behind them. This allows for a person to recognise their own strengths and weaknesses. Knowing the self is vital to be able to perform daily functions effectively. Therefore, teaching this construct is the first aspect included in the module.



The second cluster is the self-management. This construct is said to only be useful to a person when distress or disruptive feelings are completely eliminated (Goleman, 2001). Meanwhile, the third cluster which is social awareness is shown by empathy, service and organizational awareness. Social awareness refers to the being able to read another person's behaviour (Goleman, 2001). This involves the ability to differentiate non-verbal cues and associate them with their current emotions.

Finally, the fourth cluster is the relationship management cluster. An individual with good relationship management is capable of knowing other people's shortcomings and work accordingly to driving them towards achieving another's goal. Therefore, Goleman (2001) says that the ability to influence, communication, conflict management and catalyst, leadership and teamwork are vital skills in developing this specific cluster of emotional intelligence.





1.7.2.2 Operational Definition of Emotional Intelligence

The emotional intelligence level in this study will be measured using the Universiti Sains Malaysia Emotional Quotient Inventory (USMEQ-i). This inventory consists of 7 emotional domains which are emotional control, emotional maturity, emotional awareness, emotional conscientiousness, emotional commitment, emotional fortitude, emotional maturity and one faking index. The Faking Index is part of the instrument which allows the detection of participants who are faking to be appear good which allows for better screening in the beginning of the experimental study. Table 1.2 shows the definitions of each emotional domain and the faking index from the USMEQ-i as stated in the manual (Muhamad Saiful Bahri, Ahmad Fuad, & Ab Rahman, 2010).



Table 1.2

The definitions of each domains in the USMEQ-i (Muhamad Saiful Bahri et al., 2010)

Emotional Domains in USMEQ-i Manual	Definition (Muhamad Saiful Bahri et al., 2010)	Items
Emotional Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to control self from emotions that are disruptive as well as impulsive feelings. Able to remain optimistic and can remain calm and unflappable. Thrive under immense pressure. Focused and can think clearly. Don't allow setbacks to weigh them down and can transform their mishaps into something good. Possess strong internal control and inner-self. 	4, 7, 10, 11, 12, 25, 32, 38, 44
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to guide emotions towards 	





Emotional Maturity	<p>achieving their goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess the drive to reach objectives and standards to achieve good outcomes. • Have challenging goals and able to work extra and take calculated risks to pursue these goals. • Overcome uncertainties by searching for solutions and learn better ways to improve performance. • Have hope to succeed rather than fear of failure. • Perceive setbacks as things that they can control instead of as a problem that came from lack of personal skills. 	14, 23, 30, 33, 34, 37, 42, 43
Emotional Conscientiousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to take responsibility and can maintain integrity to perform well. • Able to take tough and principled stand even if they are out of norm. • Remain committed, ethical, keep promises and are trustable. • Careful, organized and responsible in meeting their objectives. • Rely on own values, principles, intentions and feelings and are always consistent with them. 	5, 9, 17, 20, 26
Emotional Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand own and other people's states, preferences, feelings and resources. • Can identify their feelings and the reasons behind those feelings. • Can connect their feelings with what they think, say and do and know the consequences of it towards others. • Guiding awareness of own goals and values. 	22, 28, 29, 40, 41
Emotional Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can align and work together with others towards achieving common goals. • Willing to make sacrifices for reaching organizational goals. • Make decisions and clarify choices based on the group's core values to have a purpose for the bigger mission. • Find other opportunities to complete group's goals. 	15, 16, 36, 45



**Emotional Fortitude**

- Able to negotiate and solve disagreements and send more convincing messages.
- Use diplomacy and wisdom to handle difficult situations and people.
- Identify conflicts and take measures to overcome them.
- Have win-win solutions, encourage a good debate and have open discussions.
- Able to admit to own mistakes and bring forth other's unethical doings.
- Can compromise and can take in emotional cues.

1, 3, 31, 46

Emotional Expression

- Are flexible in adjusting own emotions, thoughts and behaviours in different situations.
- Careful and diligent in reacting to own and other's emotions.
- Able to provide an appealing presentation to the listeners.
- Possess good expression of non-verbal communications and this includes voice tone, body language and facial expressions.
- Good in winning people over.
- Capable of building support and consensus using complex strategies and indirect influences.

2, 8, 19, 35

Faking Index

- Identifies respondents who tend to overrate themselves. This is based on a different scoring than the other emotional domains. The scorings will be discussed in Chapter 3.

6, 13, 18, 21,
24, 27, 39**1.7.2.3 Conceptual Definition of Automatic Negative Thoughts**

Beck's Cognitive Triad Thoughts are linked to cognitive skills. Aaron T. Beck (1967), a pioneer researcher who developed the theory of depression suggested early on that many depressive symptoms are results of tendency of an individual to interpret daily



events in a negative way and that these are automatic and it may occur either consciously or unconsciously (Barlow & Durand, 2012). These are called automatic negative thoughts. Automatic negative thoughts relate to people who tend to automatically link positive occurrences in their life as negative events. This is proven to lead to depression (Nyarko & Amissah, 2014). There are three dimensions in this triad which are the views of self, the world and the future (Barlow and Durand, 2012). Children's cognitive triads do not precede depression, but adolescents' cognitive triads do (Timbremont & Braet, 2006).

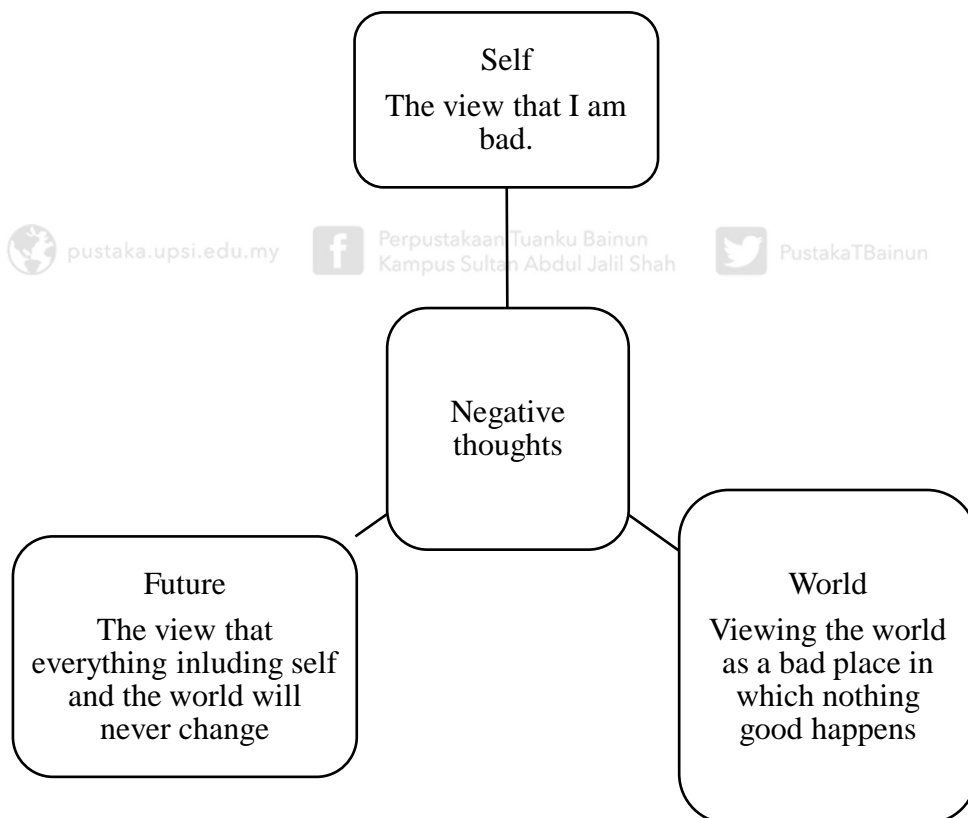


Figure 1.1 Beck's Cognitive Triad for Depression Theory

In the book *CBT for Beginners*, Simmons and Griffiths (2014) explain that the process of identifying negative thoughts is to let the client become more aware of

their thoughts when they feel a particular emotion strongly. These thoughts are more often portrayed as images or verbally and can be either negative or positive. Therefore, this theory was suitable to associate automatic negative thoughts with emotion competence.

1.7.2.4 Operational Definition of Automatic Negative Thoughts

Negative thinking is measured using the Automatic Thoughts Questionnaire (Hollon & Kendall, 1980). The instrument has 4 subscales of automatic thoughts which are personal maladjustment and desire for change (PMDC), negative self-concepts and negative expectations (NSNE), low self-esteem (LSE) and helplessness. There are a total of 30 items measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “not at all” to “all the time”. Table 1.3 shows the ATQ subscales and it’s items.

Table 1.3

ATQ subscales and the items

Automatic Thought Types	Items
Personal Maladjustment and Desire for Change (PMDC)	7, 10, 14, 20, 26
Negative Self-Concepts and Negative Expectations (NSNE)	2, 3, 9, 21, 23, 24, 28
Low Self-Esteem (LSE)	17, 18
Helplessness	29, 30

1.8 Conceptual Framework

This study involves an experimental and a control group. This is a quasi-experimental control group design which involves a pre-test and a post-test group. The experimental group will receive the Emotional Competency Module training while the control group will not receive the training. Hence, the Figure 1.2 shows the conceptual framework for this current study.

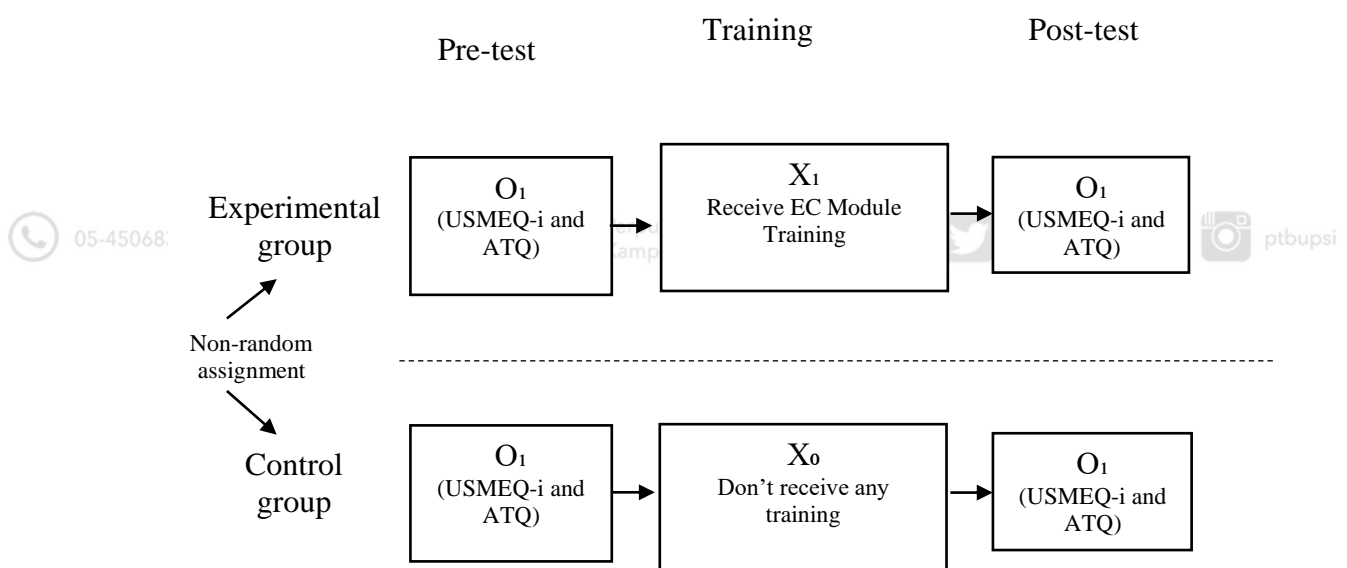


Figure 1.2 Conceptual framework

Figure 1.2 portrays a more concise image of how this study was conducted. Participants were conveniently assigned to each group. Hence, there is pre and post-test for each of the dependent variables measured. The only manipulated variable is that the experimental group received the Emotional Competency Module training whereas the control group did not.

1.9 Hypotheses

The hypotheses are based on the objectives of this study. The objective of the study is to examine the effect of emotional competency training on the emotional intelligence and automatic negative thoughts based on the control and experimental group among adolescents. Hence the hypotheses of the study are:

H₀1: The Emotional Competency training was not effective in increasing the emotional intelligence level based on the following hypotheses:

H₀1a: There is no significant difference between the pre-test means of emotional intelligence between the experimental and control groups.

H₀1b: There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test means of emotional intelligence of the experimental group.

H₀1c: There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test means of emotional intelligence of the control group.

H₀1d: There is no significant difference between the post-test means of emotional intelligence between the experimental and control groups.

H₀2: The Emotional Competency training was not effective in decreasing the automatic negative thoughts level based on the following hypotheses:

H₀2a: There is no significant difference between the pre-test means of automatic negative thoughts between the experimental and control groups.

H₀2b: There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test means of automatic negative thoughts of the experimental group.



H₀2c: There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test means of automatic negative thoughts of the control group.

H₀2d: There is no significant difference between the post-test means of automatic negative thoughts between the experimental and control groups.

1.10 Conclusion

Overall, this chapter explains the theories and concepts that will help answering the research questions of the study that will be conducted. Emotional problems are the basis of the research that requires dire attention in Malaysia. This study uses a quasi-experimental study. The Goleman's Emotional Competence Theory involves the four domains, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management which were also used to design the Emotional Competency Module. Whereas the Beck's Cognitive Triad is tested for measuring the automatic negative thoughts level of adolescents in this study. Finally, a conceptual framework is built to show the experiment design used to test the variables.

