Perceptions of Emotional Intelligence in English Language Learning Among Undergraduates

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ABSTRACT

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognise, understand, regulate, and utilise emotions in oneself and in others (Mayer et al., 2004). Studies have investigated emotional intelligence (EI) in the context of foreign language learning, particularly its role in influencing motivation, anxiety, and language acquisition. The purpose of this study was to investigate students' use of emotional intelligence in the process of learning and using English as a second language. A quantitative study was conducted to explore motivation factors for learning among undergraduates at a public university in Malaysia. A purposive sample of 84 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used a 5-Likert scale survey (ranging from 1 - strongly disagree to 5 - strongly agree) and is rooted in Schutte et al.'s (1998) instrument titled, The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT), which was modified into the Emotional Intelligence in English Learning Self-Report Test (EILLES). The overall high percentages and mean scores of RQ 1 to RQ 4 (perceptions of emotions, managing own emotions, managing others' emotions, and utilisation of emotions) reveal that learners' perceptions of emotional intelligence in English language learning are agreeably positive and deemed as useful and necessary. The implication of the study should encourage educators to incorporate EI training into their ESL teaching and learning practices. Suggestions to future researchers are to selectively sample a balanced number of female and male students to increase the reliability and accuracy of results, to target a bigger sample population, and to explore the educators' perspective on EI in language learning and investigate other factors/sub-scales of EI in language learning.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to recognise, understand, and manage emotions in oneself and in others. Unlike traditional measures of intelligence that place importance on cognitive ability (IQ), EI emphasises self-regulation and interpersonal skills, which are now widely acknowledged as essential across social and professional environments. In the workplace, EI is particularly valued in leadership, where high performance is often linked to the ability to understand and manage emotions (Goleman, 1995). It is also described as part of social intelligence, as it involves applying emotional awareness to make better decisions and respond appropriately in social situations (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Thus, in general, these perspectives suggest that EI plays a crucial role in shaping one's success across personal, social, and professional contexts.

While EI is often discussed in social and professional domains, it is also increasingly viewed as an important factor in education, particularly in English language learning among undergraduates. The concept normally relates to the ability to recognise, understand, manage, and utilise emotions, significantly impacting learners' engagement and success in language learning environments (Journal & Owaidah, 2024; Topal, 2024). As identified by Goleman, EI is integral in predicting academic outcomes as it facilitates better interpersonal relationships, enhances motivation, and reduces anxiety, all of which are critical in a second language learning context (Balasubramanian & Al-Mahrooqi, 2016). Other empirical studies support this view, showing that higher EI correlates positively not only with overall academic achievement but also specifically with language proficiency (Tevdovska, 2017; Vistorte et al., 2024).

In Malaysia, the increasing recognition of emotional intelligence as a crucial component in language learning provides valuable insights into the educational experiences of undergraduate students learning English as a second language (ESL). Given Malaysia's multicultural context, where English functions as a second language for many, understanding the relationship between emotional intelligence and language learning is particularly important. Malaysian learners often encounter emotional challenges such as anxiety and self-doubt when using English, which can significantly affect their confidence and proficiency (Tee et al., 2024; Tee et al., 2023). Thus, the role of EI in supporting and enhancing their learning experience is noteworthy.

In view of these challenges, strengthening students' emotional intelligence has become more crucial than ever, as it not only enriches their learning experiences but is also increasingly recognised at the national level as a key component of youth development. The Malaysia Youth Index (2015) identified emotional intelligence and self-esteem as essential for nurturing a well-rounded generation. Success, therefore, depends not only on intellectual ability but also on emotional intelligence. Helping students become mentally, spiritually, physically, and emotionally resilient requires fostering EI, which strengthens both academic achievement and personal growth (Fakaruddin & Tharbe, 2018). Against this backdrop, the present study examines how undergraduate students apply emotional intelligence in their English language learning within the Malaysian context.

1.1 Problem Statement

Within the Malaysian higher education context, the pursuit of academic excellence among undergraduate students in Malaysia, particularly in mastering English as a second language, is often challenged by emotional factors. Emotional intelligence (EI) has been known to play a significant role in shaping students' academic performance, especially in language learning, as it influences motivation, anxiety, and resilience (Shao et al., 2013; Abdollahi & Talib, 2015). However, many Malaysian undergraduates struggle with language anxiety, which negatively affects their confidence and competence in using English. Although previous research has demonstrated a positive relationship between higher levels of EI and improved language learning outcomes, this link remains underexplored in the Malaysian context.

This gap highlights the need to investigate how Malaysian students perceive and apply EI in their English language learning experiences (Öz et al., 2015; Fakaruddin & Tharbe, 2018).

Emotional intelligence (EI), which includes self-awareness, emotional regulation, and social skills, enables students with higher EI to manage the language-learning process more effectively and reduce anxiety (Othman & Muda, 2018; Chamundeswari, 2013). However, many Malaysian learners still lack the emotional skills needed to overcome these challenges. This highlights the importance of examining EI levels among Malaysian undergraduates and how they relate to English learning experiences. If this issue is not addressed, language learning barriers may continue, compounded by the limited psychological support available in educational settings (Ojewola, 2022).

Malaysia's cultural and social diversity presents both challenges and opportunities in understanding the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in English language learning. Cultural factors influence how emotional skills are expressed and applied, making it important to explore how Malaysian students perceive and use EI in their learning (Ramachandran et al., 2020). Insights from such studies can guide teaching approaches that not only improve language proficiency but also foster the holistic development of emotionally intelligent undergraduates (Abdollahi et al., 2018; Fernández-Martínez et al., 2019).

Considering these issues and concerns, this study examines how Malaysian undergraduates perceive and apply emotional intelligence in learning English, as a way of addressing the emotional barriers that hinder their progress. Understanding this relationship is crucial for fostering both academic success and emotional well-being in their language learning journeys.

1.2 Objective and Research Questions

This study aims to explore the perception of emotional intelligence in English language learning among undergraduates at a public university. Specifically, this study aims to answer the following questions:

(i) How do learners perceive their emotions in the learning of English as a second language?

(ii) How do learners perceive how they manage their own emotions in the learning of English as a second language?

(iii) How do learners perceive how they manage others' emotions in the learning of English as a second language?

(iv) How do learners perceive their utilisation of emotions in the learning of English as a second language?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to the capacity to recognise, understand, regulate, and utilise emotions in oneself and in others. It is an essential aspect of human functioning that influences how individuals navigate social complexities, make personal decisions, and achieve positive outcomes in various settings (Mayer et al., 2004). Goleman (1995) popularised the concept of EI by highlighting its significance in areas such as leadership, academic performance, and interpersonal relationships. He proposed five core components of EI: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Recent studies further reinforce the relevance of EI within academic contexts. For example, MacCann et al. (2023) conducted a meta-analysis that confirmed the predictive role of EI in academic achievement across a range of educational levels. The study emphasised that emotionally intelligent students are more likely to manage academic stress, remain motivated, and build supportive relationships with peers and instructors. Similarly, Bereded et al. (2025) found that EI positively correlates with academic success among first-year university

students, with academic engagement serving as a key mediating factor. Their findings underscore the importance of fostering EI in education to support student success and resilience.

2.2 Strategies in ESL Learning

In English as a Second Language (ESL) learning, the deployment of appropriate learning strategies significantly enhances language proficiency. These strategies often include metacognitive approaches such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's own learning process (Oxford, 1990). Rahmat and Aripin (2021) proposed a Metacognitive Writing Strategies Model, identifying planning, drafting, reviewing, and revising as core actions that contribute to improved writing performance among ESL learners. Their research found that students who actively employed metacognitive strategies demonstrated stronger writing outcomes and greater language awareness. In addition to metacognitive strategy use, students' beliefs and emotional readiness can also influence their writing success. Othman et al. (2022) examined how writers' beliefs—shaped by internal self-perception and external expectations—affect writing motivation and performance. Their study emphasised that positive beliefs, particularly when reinforced by encouraging feedback, can foster greater confidence and persistence in writing tasks. Similarly, Azhari et al. (2022) identified rhetorical problems that students often encounter in academic writing, such as fear of writing and difficulty composing ideas due to limited background knowledge. These challenges reflect the need for emotional and strategic support in ESL writing instruction.

Beyond cognitive and emotional beliefs, incorporating emotional intelligence (EI) into ESL teaching practices has been shown to further improve learner outcomes. A study by Sadig (2024) demonstrated that when ESL educators embed EI-focused activities such as role-playing, peer collaboration, and reflective journaling, that results in increased classroom engagement and emotional resilience. Furthermore, Hassan and Kamaruddin (2023) support this view, stating that emotionally aware learners are more likely to persist in language learning tasks, cope with challenges, and engage in meaningful interactions with their peers and instructors. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence, metacognitive strategy use, and writing beliefs are interlinked and collectively contribute to the enhancement of English language acquisition.

2.3 Emotional Intelligence in Language Learning

Many studies have investigated emotional intelligence (EI) in the context of foreign language learning, particularly its role in influencing motivation, anxiety, and language acquisition. One of the earliest frameworks to examine EI in education was developed by Schutte et al. (1998), who designed the Emotional Intelligence Scale based on Salovey and Mayer's model. This framework has since been adapted in numerous studies exploring how emotional competence affects academic learning.

One study by Pishghadam et al. (2013) investigated Iranian EFL learners and found that students with higher emotional intelligence experienced less foreign language classroom anxiety, which in turn positively affected their speaking and listening skills. The study employed the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale and a language anxiety questionnaire among 123 university students and concluded that EI significantly contributes to language learning by creating a more emotionally supportive learning environment. Another recent study by Thao and Nguyen (2023) explored the connection between EI and self-regulated learning strategies among Vietnamese undergraduates studying English. Their quantitative study, conducted with 215 participants, showed a strong positive correlation between emotional regulation and self-motivation in ESL learning contexts. The researchers suggested that training in emotional intelligence can empower learners to better manage their emotional responses during language acquisition, ultimately enhancing their engagement and outcomes.

Locally, Othman (2015) explored the perceptions and attitudes of Malaysian undergraduates towards learning English, identifying significant correlations between students' emotional states, gender, and academic performance. It was noted that learners with greater self-regulation and empathy were more

motivated and confident in language learning settings. These emotional intelligence traits not only affected learners' persistence but also shaped their overall learning experience and attitude towards English language acquisition. To further enrich the understanding of EI in Malaysian ESL settings, Rahman and Azmi (2021) investigated how emotional intelligence contributes to learners' reading comprehension skills. Their study, published in the ESTEEM Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, emphasized that students who exhibited better emotional control and awareness were more likely to engage with reading materials meaningfully. The researchers concluded that EI training could complement traditional language instruction to boost learners' cognitive and emotional readiness.

Essentially, previous studies show that emotional intelligence (EI) plays an important role in learning a second language. It helps learners manage their emotions, stay motivated, reduce anxiety, and build confidence; all of which support consistent language learning. EI also helps learners connect better with their tasks. However, there is still limited research on how undergraduate students understand and use EI in their English language learning. This shows the importance and relevance of the current study.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

In order for learning to take place, learners need to store information (Rahmat, 2024). How they store the information depends on how they perceive the learning. Learners need to manage their emotions to enable maximum information storage. This study explores undergraduates' perceptions of their emotional intelligence in English language learning. Figure 1 below shows the conceptual framework of this study. This framework was created based on Zoghlami et al.'s (2022) Arabic language version of Schutte et al.'s (1998) Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) which comprises four factors or subscales of EI:

(i)   Perception of Emotions: the ability to identify one's own emotions as well as others' (e.g., tone of voice, body language, facial expressions, etc.).

(ii) Managing Own Emotions: the ability to manage one's own emotional well-being to achieve desired outcomes.

(iii) Managing Others' Emotions: the ability to manage others' emotional well-being to achieve desired outcomes.

(iv) Utilisation of Emotions: the ability to use emotions to facilitate thinking skills to solve problems and make decisions.
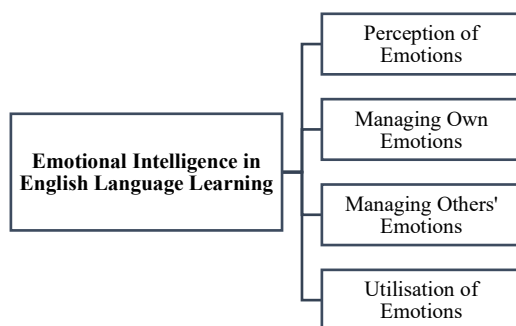

Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of the Emotional Intelligence in English Language Learning Self-Report Test (EILLES)

3.   METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study is done to explore motivation factors for learning among undergraduates at a public university in Malaysia. A purposive sample of students taking English courses at the university were chosen. The researchers relied on convenience sampling to target at least 100 respondents, however, only 84 respondents provided feedback. The instrument used is a 5-Likert scale survey (ranging from 1 - strongly disagree to 5 - strongly agree) and is rooted in Schutte et al.'s (1998) instrument titled, The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT), which was modified into the Emotional Intelligence in English Learning Self-Report Test (hereby EILLES) to reveal the variables in table 1 below. The survey has 4 sections. Section A has items on demographic profile. Section B has 9 items on Perception of Emotions. Section C has 9 items on Managing Own Emotions. Section D has 8 items on Managing Others' Emotions and section E has 5 items on Utilization of Emotions.

Table 1. Distribution of Items in the Survey

Section	Category	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha
B	Perception of Emotions	9	.711
C	Managing Own Emotions	9	.915
D	Managing Others' Emotions	8	.879
E	Utilization of Emotions	5	.849
	Total No. of Items	**31**	**.945**

Table 1 also shows the reliability of the survey. The analysis shows a Cronbach alpha of .711 for Section B - Perception of Emotions. The analysis also revealed an analysis of a Cronbach Alpha of .915 for Section C - Managing Own Emotions, a Cronbach Alpha of .879 for Section D, and a Cronbach Alpha of .849 for Section E with an overall Cronbach Alpha of .945 for all 31 items; thus, revealing a good reliability of the instrument chosen/used. Further analysis using SPSS is done to present the findings to answer the research questions for this study.

4.   FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the study. The results are organised into four key areas: Perception of Emotions, Managing Own Emotions, Managing Others' Emotions, and Utilisation of Emotions.

4.1 Findings for Demographic Profile

In this research. 84 students completed the questionnaire, and their demographic information is shown in Tables 2 and 3 below:

Table 2. Percentage for Gender

1	Male	29%
2	Female	71%

The demographic data reveals a significant gender imbalance among participants. According to the data shown in Table 2, the majority of respondents, 71% are female students and another 29% are male students,

suggesting a higher number of female students in the sample.

Table 3. Percentage for English Course Programme

1	LG	37%
2	ELC	63%

Table 3 indicates that 63% of the participants have registered in English Language Communication (ELC) courses, while only 37% have enrolled in the English for Professional Communication (LG) course. This indicates a higher percentage of students enrolled in the ELC program compared to those in the LG program.

4.2 Findings for Perception of Emotions

This section aims to answer RQ1: How do learners perceive their emotions in the learning of English as a second language?

Table 4. Learners' Perception of Emotions in English Learning

Survey Question	Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)
Learners' Awareness of Their Own Emotions		
I am aware of my emotions in English learning situations	0	80.9
I understand why my emotions change when learning English.	1.2	69
I can identify different emotions while learning English.	0	69
Learners' Ability to Interpret Emotions in Others		
I can interpret emotions based on facial expressions and body language.	2.4	76.2
I can interpret emotions from speech intonation and tone.	1.2	78.6
I pay attention to others' non-verbal cues in English interactions.	0	64.3
Challenges in Emotional Perception		
I find it challenging to interpret body language and facial expressions in English.	13.1	38.1
Understanding the emotions of others in English interactions is challenging.	4.8	63.1
Importance of Emotions in Learning		
Emotions play a vital role in my English learning journey.	1.2	76.2

Table 4 summarises the key findings regarding learners' perception of emotions while learning English as a second language.

4.2.1. Learners' Awareness of Their Own Emotions

The findings demonstrate that most learners possess strong emotional awareness. Specifically, 80.9% agreed that they are conscious of their emotions during English learning. In addition, 69% reported being able to identify different emotions, while an equal proportion indicated that they understand the reasons behind emotional changes in their learning experience.

4.2.2. Learners' Ability to Interpret Emotions in Others

Although students are generally aware of their own emotions, their ability to interpret others' emotions shows variation. A large proportion (76.2%) stated that they can read emotions through facial expressions and body language, while 78.6% reported relying on intonation and tone of speech. However, only 64.3% indicated that they consistently pay attention to non-verbal cues during interactions.

4.2.3. Challenges in Emotional Perception

Despite demonstrating awareness, some learners still face challenges in recognising emotions in others. About 38.1% reported difficulty in interpreting facial expressions and body language, and 63.1% acknowledged that understanding others' emotions in English interactions remains a challenge.

4.2.4. Importance of Emotions in Learning

Finally, the results affirm the central role of emotions in the learning process. A substantial 76.2% of respondents agreed that emotions significantly influence their English learning journey.

Table 5. Mean for Perception of Emotions

Item	Mean
1. I find it challenging to interpret the body language and facial expressions of people speaking in English.	2.5
2. I am aware of my emotions as I encounter various English language learning situations.	3.8
3. I am attentive to the non-verbal cues that I show during English language interactions with others.	3.7
4. I can interpret the emotions of others by observing their facial expressions during English language interactions.	3.9
5. I understand why my emotions change when using or learning English.	3.8
6. I can easily identify various kinds of emotions as they arise while learning English.	3.8
7. I pay attention to the non-verbal cues displayed by others during English language interactions.	3.8
8. I can interpret people's emotions by listening to the intonation and tone of their speech in the English language	4
9. Understanding the emotions of others during English language interactions is challenging for me.	3.2

The results in Table 5 show varying levels of learners' emotional intelligence in relation to English language learning. Item 1 recorded the lowest mean score (M = 2.5), indicating that many learners find it difficult to interpret body language and facial expressions when engaging in English interactions.

By contrast, learners demonstrated relatively strong self-awareness of their emotions. Item 2 (M = 3.8) suggests that most learners are aware of their emotional states in different learning situations, while Item 3 (M = 3.7) reflects that they are generally conscious of their own non-verbal communication. Similarly, Item 4 (M = 3.9) shows that learners are reasonably confident in interpreting others' emotions through facial expressions during English interactions. Items 5, 6, and 7, all with a mean of 3.8, further highlight learners' consistent emotional awareness. These findings suggest that students are able to identify a range of emotions, understand the causes of emotional changes, and pay attention to non-verbal cues in English learning contexts.

Notably, Item 8 achieved the highest mean score (M = 4.0), suggesting that learners are particularly adept at interpreting emotions conveyed through intonation and tone of voice, demonstrating strong auditory emotional intelligence. Finally, Item 9 (M = 3.2) shows that understanding others' emotions in English interactions presents a moderate level of difficulty. While some learners encounter challenges, the overall level of difficulty appears manageable rather than severe.

4.3 Findings for Managing Own Emotions

This section presents the data to answer RQ 2: How do learners perceive how they manage their own emotions in the learning of English as a second language?

Table 6. Mean for Managing Own Emotions

Item	Mean
10. When I encounter English language learning obstacles, I recall previous times I faced similar challenges and overcame them.	3.7
11. I believe I can succeed in learning the English language.	4.2
12. I approach English language learning with optimism, expecting progress and success.	4.1
13. When I experience joy or satisfaction from my English language progress, I continue to maintain this and build upon it.	3.9
14. I actively seek out English language learning activities that bring me joy and fulfilment.	3.8
15. I have the ability to manage my emotions effectively during English language learning tasks.	3.8
16. I motivate myself by envisioning successful outcomes when completing English language tasks.	4.1
17. When faced with English language learning challenges, I persist because I believe in my ability to overcome them.	3.9
18. I harness positive English language learning moods to maintain motivation when encountering obstacles.	3.8

The mean scores in Table 6 (ranging from 3.7 to 4.2) suggest that learners generally perceive themselves as capable of managing their emotions during English language learning. The lowest score (Item 10, M = 3.7) indicates a moderate reliance on past experiences when dealing with current challenges, reflecting a developing but not yet strong sense of emotional resilience. By contrast, the highest score (Item 11, M = 4.2) demonstrates a strong belief in their ability to succeed, highlighting confidence as a key factor in their self-management strategies

Optimism also emerged as a positive theme, with Item 12 (M = 4.1) showing that learners expect progress and success, while Items 13 (M = 3.9) and 17 (M = 3.9) suggest that learners sustain motivation by maintaining joy after progress and persisting in the face of obstacles. Items 14, 15, and 18 (all M = 3.8) highlight that learners actively seek enjoyable tasks, regulate their emotions during activities, and use positive moods to stay motivated, suggesting a balanced level of emotional regulation. Finally, Item 16 (M = 4.1) underscores the role of self-motivation through visualisation of success, which aligns with learners' optimistic outlook.

Taken together, these findings indicate that learners possess strong confidence and optimism in their English learning journey, supported by strategies such as self-motivation and persistence. However, their emotional resilience in overcoming challenges appears more moderate, suggesting an area for further strengthening.

4.4 Findings for Managing Others' Emotions

This section presents the data to answer RQ 3: How do learners perceive how they manage others' emotions in the learning of English as a second language?

Table 7. Mean for Managing Others' Emotions

Item	Mean
19. I know when to express my English language learning difficulties to others. (e.g., classmates, instructors)	3.7
20. Others find it easy to communicate with me in the English language.	3.7
21. I enjoy sharing my English language learning experiences with others.	3.9
22. I can create English language learning situations that others will find enjoyable.	3.6
23. I strive to present myself in a way that fosters positive English language exchanges.	3.8
24. I praise and encourage others when they make progress in English language learning.	4
25. When someone shares a significant English learning experience, I can empathize with their feelings.	4
26. I offer support to others to boost their language learning confidence.	4

The findings in Table 7 reveal a generally positive perception of learners' ability to manage others' emotions in English learning contexts, with mean scores ranging from 3.6 to 4.0. The highest scores (Items 24, 25, and 26, all M = 4.0) suggest that learners are empathetic, encouraging, and supportive toward their peers, highlighting strong interpersonal sensitivity. This indicates that learners not only recognise others' progress but also actively contribute to building their peers' confidence.

Meanwhile, Item 21 (M = 3.9) reflects learners' enjoyment in sharing their learning experiences, which reinforces a sense of openness and social connectedness. Item 23 (M = 3.8) shows that learners are mindful of how they present themselves to foster positive interactions, pointing to self-awareness in social communication. Items 19 and 20 (both M = 3.7) suggest that while learners are moderately confident in expressing difficulties and maintaining communication, these areas are less developed compared to their ability to empathise and encourage. Finally, Item 22 (M = 3.6), the lowest score, indicates that learners are less confident in creating enjoyable learning situations for others, suggesting a gap between being supportive and actively shaping peer experiences.

Overall, the findings highlight that learners are socially aware and empathetic, with strengths in encouragement and emotional support. However, their lower confidence in creating engaging experiences for peers points to a potential area for growth in collaborative learning dynamics.

4.5 Findings for Utilization of Emotions

This section presents the data to answer RQ 4: How do learners perceive their utilisation of emotions in the learning of English as a second language?

Table 8. Mean for Utilisation of Emotions

Item	Mean
27. My English language learning experiences have made me reassess what linguistic skills are essential.	3.9
28. When my mood changes, I become more open to exploring different English language learning strategies.	3.8
29. Emotions play a vital role in my English language learning journey.	4
30. When I am in a positive language learning mood, overcoming English language challenges becomes easier.	4
31. Being in a positive mood helps stimulate creative ideas in English language learning situations.	4.2

Table 8 illustrates how learners perceive the utilisation of emotions in their English language learning, with mean scores ranging from 3.8 to 4.2. Overall, the findings suggest that learners recognise the value of emotions as a driving force in their learning process. Items 27 (M = 3.9) and 28 (M = 3.8) indicate that learners moderately agree emotions influence their openness to reassessing essential linguistic skills and exploring new learning strategies. This suggests that while emotions do contribute to adaptive learning, their role in prompting strategic changes is less pronounced compared to other aspects of emotional use.

In contrast, items 29 and 30 (both M = 4.0) highlight the strong motivational impact of positive emotions. Learners acknowledge that being in a positive mood not only enhances their overall learning

journey but also makes it easier to overcome challenges, underscoring the functional role of emotions in sustaining motivation and resilience. The highest score (Item 31, M = 4.2) emphasises the link between emotions and creativity. Learners reported that positive moods stimulate creative ideas, suggesting that emotional states may play a critical role in higher-order thinking and problem-solving in language learning.

Taken together, these findings reveal that while emotions moderately shape learners' adaptability in terms of strategies and skill reassessment, they exert a stronger influence on motivation, resilience, and creativity. This underscores the importance of cultivating positive emotional experiences to enhance not only persistence but also innovative approaches to English language learning.

4.6 Synthesis of Findings

Overall, the findings across the four domains; 1) perception of emotions, 2) managing one's own emotions, 3) managing others' emotions, and 4) utilisation of emotions highlight the multifaceted role of emotional intelligence in English language learning. Learners generally demonstrate strong self-awareness and confidence, particularly in recognising their own emotions and sustaining motivation through optimism and persistence. At the same time, they show empathy and support toward their peers, although they are slightly less confident in actively creating engaging learning situations for others. Importantly, the findings reveal that positive emotions serve as a catalyst for motivation, resilience, and creativity, whereas challenges remain in interpreting non-verbal cues and adapting strategies based on emotional states. Taken together, these results suggest that while learners already leverage emotions as valuable resources in their language learning journey, there remains scope to strengthen their adaptive use of emotions and their ability to shape collaborative and emotionally engaging learning environments.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

The overall findings for this study revealed that learners' perceptions of emotions while learning English (RQ1) are positive and that being aware of their emotions helps increase their learning during English language situations. This concurs with the results of the study done by Thao and Nguyen (2023) who found that when learners were able to manage their own emotional responses during language acquisition, it ultimately enhanced their learning engagement and outcomes. Similarly, learners who are able to identify various kinds of emotions within themselves and are highly capable of regulating these emotions (RQ2) yielded positive results on the Likert scale and this aligns with a study by Othman (2015) who found that learners with greater self-regulation and empathy were more motivated and confident in language learning settings which not only affected learners' persistence but also shaped their overall learning experience and attitude towards English language acquisition. Meanwhile, the learners perceive their abilities to manage others' emotions during English language learning (RQ3) as positive and this is consistent with the results of another study conducted by Sadig (2024) who discovered that when EI-focused activities such as role-playing and peer collaboration were performed in class, it resulted in an increase in classroom engagement and emotional resilience among the students. Finally, when it comes to learners' perceptions in utilising their emotions during second language learning (RQ4), they feel quite strongly about the importance of being in a positive state of mind to facilitate thinking skills to solve problems and make decisions and this is supported by the study by Rahman and Azmi (2021) who deduced that students who exhibited better emotional control and awareness were more likely to engage with reading materials meaningfully. To conclude, the overall results of this present study prove that emotional intelligence is necessary and a vital mediating factor to boost learners' English language acquisition, thus proving that regardless of the subject matter that students take, acquiring emotional intelligence will result in academic success.

5.2 Pedagogical Implication and Recommendations for Future Research

The EILESS questionnaire was specifically modified to identify the importance of emotional intelligence among students in English language learning. The findings of the emotional intelligence scale scores suggest that the results of this study could encourage educators to incorporate emotional intelligence training into ESL teaching practices to further improve learner outcomes. However, the majority of the participants were female students, indicating a gender bias that could have determined the scale of agreeability of the results as a whole. It is suggested to future researchers to find a balanced number of gender samples if gender is an important variable that can determine the accuracy of future overall results. Moreover, future researchers are encouraged to obtain a bigger sample size that represents the targeted population when replicating this study for more reliable results that could differ from this present research. In addition, this study only measured learners' perception of EI, therefore it would be interesting for future researchers to explore the educators' perspectives on the importance of EI in language learning as well as look at other factors or subscales of EI than the ones used in the present research.

6.   ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/FUNDING

7.   CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors agree that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with any funder.

8.   AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Nik Mastura Nik Ismail Azlan: Questionnaire construction, Abstract, Introduction, Conceptual Framework, Methodology, Findings for Utilization of Emotions, Conclusion, Transferring, reviewing and editing of writing to journal template, Revisions of Methodology, Conclusion, and Writing and Referencing Style; **Salwa Othman**: Literature review, Findings for managing others' emotions, Revisions and synthesis of Findings (Sections 4.2–4.6); **Muhammad Aizat bin Azhari**: Findings for managing own emotions, Revisions and synthesis of Introduction and Problem Statement; **Dianna Suzieanna Mohamad Shah**: Findings for demographic profile, Findings for perception of emotions.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

A.1.   Objective:
   1.   To find out how students' emotional intelligence relates to various aspects of language learning, specifically in the components of perception of emotions, managing own emotions, managing others' emotions, and utilization of emotions.

A.2.   Demographic Data
   1.   Gender : __ Male   __ Female
   2.   Faculty :
   3.   Semester: _____
   4.   Age   :
   5.   English course:

A.3 Emotional Intelligence in English Language Learning Self-Report Test (EILLES)

Instructions: Circle the number to which each item applies to you using the following scale.
1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

A) PERCEPTION OF EMOTIONS	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I find it challenging to interpret the body language and facial expressions of people speaking in English.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am aware of my emotions as I encounter various English language learning situations.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am attentive to the non-verbal cues that I show during English language interactions with others.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I can interpret the emotions of others by observing their facial expressions and body language during English language interactions.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I understand why my emotions change when using or learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I can easily identify various kinds of emotions as they arise while learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I pay attention to the non-verbal cues displayed by others during English language interactions.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I can interpret people's emotions by listening to the intonation and tone of their speech in the English language	1	2	3	4	5
9. Understanding the emotions of others during English language interactions is challenging for me.	1	2	3	4	5

B) MANAGING OWN EMOTIONS	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
10. When I encounter English language learning obstacles, I recall previous times I faced similar challenges and overcame them.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I believe I can succeed in learning the English language.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I approach English language learning with optimism, expecting progress and success.	1	2	3	4	5
13. When I experience joy or satisfaction from my English language progress, I continue to maintain this and build upon it.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I actively seek out English language learning activities that bring me joy and fulfilment.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I have the ability to manage my emotions effectively during English language learning tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I motivate myself by envisioning successful outcomes when completing English language tasks.	1	2	3	4	5

17. When faced with English language learning challenges, I persist because I believe in my ability to overcome them.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I harness positive English language learning moods to maintain motivation when encountering obstacles.	1	2	3	4	5

C) MANAGING OTHERS' EMOTIONS	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
19. I know when to express my English language learning difficulties to others. (e.g. classmates, instructors)	1	2	3	4	5
20. Others find it easy to communicate with me in the English language.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I enjoy sharing my English language learning experiences with others.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I can create English language learning situations that others will find enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I strive to present myself in a way that fosters positive English language exchanges.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I praise and encourage others when they make progress in English language learning.	1	2	3	4	5
25. When someone shares a significant English learning experience, I can empathize with their feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I offer support to others to boost their language learning confidence.	1	2	3	4	5

D) UTILISATION OF EMOTIONS	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
27. My English language learning experiences have made me reassess what linguistic skills are essential.	1	2	3	4	5
28. When my mood changes, I become more open to exploring different English language learning strategies.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Emotions play a vital role in my English language learning journey.	1	2	3	4	5
30. When I am in a positive language learning mood, overcoming English language challenges becomes easier.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Being in a positive mood helps stimulate creative ideas in English language learning situations.	1	2	3	4	5