

TOPIC: HOW VARIOUS CULTURES MANAGE EMOTIONS: DIVERSE ETHNIC GROUP OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT STUDENTS WORKING AS A TEAM IS USED AS THE CASE STUDY.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: the aim of this research is to answer the following research questions; how emotional management can be measured in individuals and if there are any cultural differences with regards to emotional management among team members.

Design / Methodology: An online survey was carried out and distributed among twenty (20) project management students who had currently or presently worked in groups / with teams, with different nationalities, the survey was analysed using descriptive statistics, SPSS, Cronbach's alpha for reliability was used to check for the reliability of the measures being analysed.

Findings: based on the hypothesis developed and the analysis used, culture was seen not to be related / have any effect on emotional intelligence, social awareness, self awareness and social awareness among student studying project management in universities, however a weak significance was seen between culture and relationship management

Research Limitations: Participants were not willing to participate in the research; this affected the sampling method. The sample size used for this research was a small sample size, and as such it is not easy to relate the findings with a larger organisation or sample size.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of emotional intelligence was coined and defined first in 1990 by John Mayer and Peter Salovey, (Dincer et al., 2011). Making reference to the origin of emotional intelligence, Dincer et al., 2011 indicated in their research work four skills for emotional intelligence, these skills include; ability to judge, understand and express emotions; supporting the development of emotional intelligence; understanding different forms of complex emotions and influencing thoughts. Obradovic et al., (2013) also in their research made reference to the four aspects / dimensions of emotional intelligence, summarising the terms; these includes; self awareness; being socially self conscious; self regulation (this was described by the authors as a way of project managers being able to effectively accomplish task with allowing their emotions interfere) and the ability to manage relationships in their research they further grouped the four aspects into two; managing others (social competence) and personal management (personal competence).

Self Awareness, Self Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Management.

Generally in organisation there's need to employ skilful, intelligent managers due to competition and productivity, Dincer et al., (2011) included emotional intelligence as part of a skill requirement for managers to be able to compete in the competitive environment, this is also in accordance with Obradovic et al., (2013) research work where skills related emotional intelligence was seen to have a large percentage in requirements for a successful business, Kulkarni et al., 2009 indicated the significant role emotional intelligence plays in enabling managers to adapt to the fast changing business environment.

Having a good understanding of emotional intelligence in organisations is seen to improve employees performance and output, (Gunkel et al., 2013), also Dincer et al., (2013) wrote about how managers having high emotional intelligence are good at decision making compared to those with low emotional intelligence.

The ability of a project manager to be able identify to his / her flaws, faults, skills, ability, and emotion and also what influence it has on people / team members and the decision they make is considered as being self aware, this is also linked with self conscious emotions.

Obradovic et al., (2013) indicated the importance of self awareness and how it affects self regulation and its importance when emotional contacts are being made with other individuals, also a criteria in having a productive project it's important that the project manager should be empathic, that is he / she should be able to lead and understand the project team by being socially aware, (Obradovic, et al., 2013), similarly Engle and Nehrt, (2011) indicated that self awareness is the main factor in emotional intelligence, and that individuals can acquire other skills through self awareness.

Individuals with high emotional intelligence are able to understand and interpret their own emotions and that of others, (Gunkel et al., 2013), this is although described by the authors as a difficult task but necessary for the success of an organisation / firm, this also is in line with Dincer et al., (2011) who also indicated that managers with high emotional intelligence contributes positively to the organisations growth and performance. Kulkarnir et al., (2009) described emotional competency as the ability of an individual to be able to identify, understand and regulate his / her emotions with the changes that is encountered throughout the job.

Culture and Emotional intelligence

In Gunkel et al., 2013 research, it was indicated that little research has been made to understand the effect of cultural values on emotional intelligence, but indicated the importance of the topic due to the fact that many organisation are venturing into international market.

Among various cultures there's a difference between how emotions are expressed and the emotions that they are able / allowed to reveal, (Gunkel et al., 2013), in (Engle and Nehrt, 2011) research he tried to find a general term to use to represent culture so as to give a proper understanding of the relationship between country and relationship management; humane orientation which was described as the level in which members of a group or society encourages one's effort by being nice, rewarding, kind and friendly, also Sadri et al., (2011) indicated that

leaders showing empathic feeling effectively in one culture may not discover empathic emotion to be as viable in different cultures since a few cultures may not esteem such practices as much as different cultures.

This study aims to identify the measures of emotional intelligence in project managers and to identify if there are any cultural effects on emotional intelligence amongst project teams, from the above literature, two main hypothesis were developed;

Hypothesis development

Previous research has discussed the importance of project managers to have a high emotional intelligence as it is seen to contribute positively to the organisation or to team members, this paper attempts to investigate if there are cultural differences among students currently studying project management in universities in UK from different nationals with regards to emotional intelligence, the independent variable (nationality) would be analysed with the dependent variable (four factors of emotional intelligence; self awareness, self management, social awareness and relationship management).

H1: Relationship management among various cultures varies

H2: Self awareness varies among various cultures

H3: Self management varies among various cultures

H4: Social awareness varies among various cultures

H5: There's a cultural difference between individuals' with high emotional intelligence

METHODOLOGY

An online survey was carried out consisting of 29 questions of which the independent variable included the age, sex, country, and educational background and dependent variable which was associated with emotional intelligence such as self awareness, relationship management, etc were collected by using questionnaire. Questions related to emotional intelligence were derived from Silver and Claret, (2011) existing self rated emotional intelligence questionnaire.

Participants

Participants were briefed of the content and purpose of the survey, and asked for their consent before the link was sent, the participants were also assured that their data would be use only for the purpose stated earlier and would be kept anonymous, only the data presented by them would be used for the survey (for example; their information won't be linked with their IP address).

Link to the online survey page was sent by broadcast message through social media to selected course mates and other project management students in other university across UK, Participants of the survey included twenty (20) selected individuals from four different nationals with experience

of working in groups or teams from various ethnicities, participants had a ratio of 9: 11 (female: male). All participants included in this study are students currently studying in the UK.

Measures

As a means to collect data, an emotional intelligence online survey was conducted; the questionnaire was developed from previous emotional intelligence questionnaire carried out by Silver and Claret, (2013), this is similar to the Wong emotional intelligence scale, (WEIS).

The survey consisted of two main sections (demographics and emotional intelligence), this is also in line with Muller 2011 who collected similar demographics items in his research work when checking for the relationship between leadership and success rate among project managers, the emotional intelligence section was further sub – grouped into four sections (Self awareness, Self management, Relationship management and Social management), giving the questionnaire different sections is in line with Yang et al., (2011), where similarly the questionnaire used for the survey in their research was grouped in sections. The questionnaire was designed using a five point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree – 5 = strongly disagree), which is in line with (Lopez – Zafra et al., 2012) where a five point Likert scale was used for scaling when collecting data for emotional intelligence.

When data were inputted into the SPSS spread sheet, the item coding was reversed, indicating that individuals' that chose 5 was recorded as 1 and the student that chose 1 were recorded as 5, this was applied to all the categories on the Likert scale (reversing all 4's to 2's and vice versa). The high EI was seen in individuals' with scores equal to or close to 145, while individuals' perceived to have low emotional intelligence were seen to have scores less than 72.5 in this research work. Among all the data collected, items / variables in the questionnaire were tested for reliability using the Cronbach's alpha reliability test in SPSS, the result for the reliability was 0.859 which is close to 1 showing a good reliability, this is in line with Yang et al., (2011) where the Cronbach's reliability was used to also test the items in the questionnaire for reliability and indicated that values above 0.7 is acceptable. Among the thirty three (33) items that were tested; (sex, nationality, self awareness, self management, social management, relationship management and overall emotional intelligence) were among, this variables would be analysed individually with other measures.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.859	32

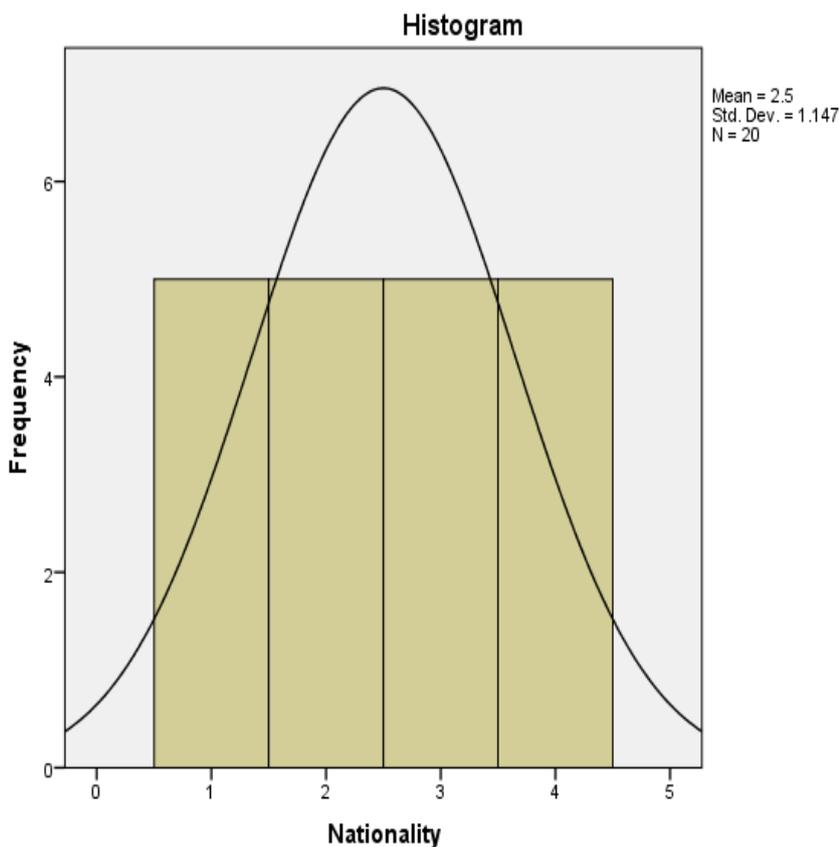
Table 1: Cronbach's alpha

Analysis

The samples collected were analysed using descriptive statistics method by the use of SPSS, this is in line with Kulkanir et al., (2009) where descriptive statistical method was used to analyse samples collected for the research purpose which was to identify the level of emotional intelligence in managers and also to get the correlation between emotional intelligence and managers performance.

All the items that would be used for correlation were tested to see if they were normally distributed; the result indicated that all the variables were normally distributed. During the analysis abbreviations would be used; emotional intelligence = EI; self awareness = SA; self management = SM; social awareness = SoA; relationship management = RM. These abbreviations would be used henceforth interchangeably during the result and discussion.

Figure 1: histogram showing a normal distribution of nationality



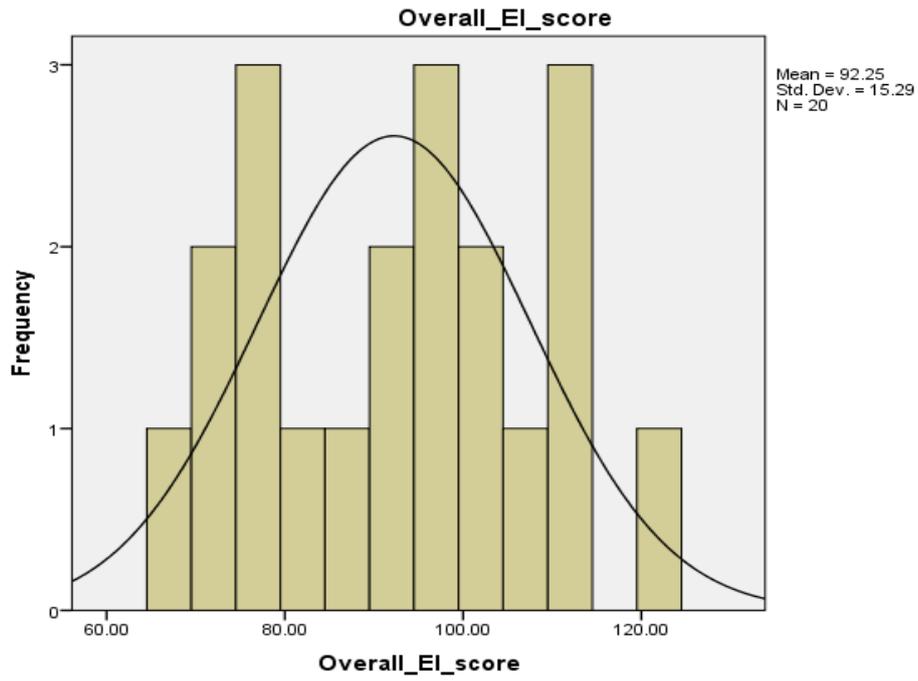


Figure 2: histogram showing a normally distributed data for the overall EI score.

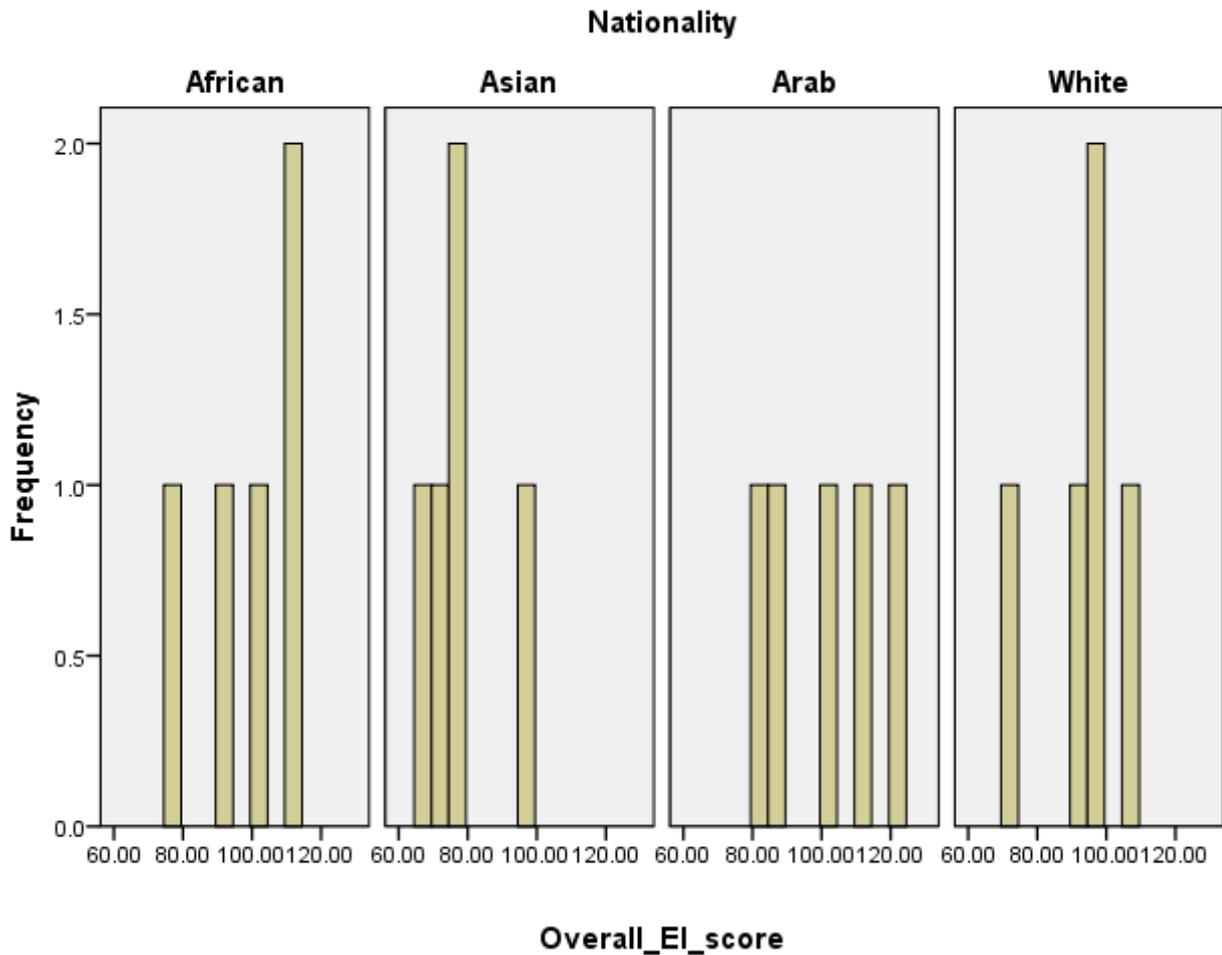


Figure 3: frequency of the various nationalities and their overall emotional intelligence score

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the hypothesis developed earlier in the research to answer the research questions, variables would be paired to check for the correlation and significance level. A T – test was used for the analysis and to also check the level of significance, whether supporting the hypothesis presented or rejecting it.

Testing for normality

Testing for the normality (that is checking if the data fits the normal distribution curve, we would be concentrating on the Shapiro – Wilk column because of the sample size. If $p > 0.05$ then the data are normally distributed, if $p < 0.05$ the data are not normally distributed.

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov – Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Nationality	.169	20	.139	.863	20	.009
Total SoA score	.122	20	.200*	.949	20	.346

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 2: test of normality

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov – Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Nationality	.169	20	.139	.863	20	.009
Total RM score	.124	20	.200*	.958	20	.509

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 3: test of normality

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov – Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Nationality	.169	20	.139	.863	20	.009
Total SM score	.149	20	.200*	.951	20	.383

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 4: test of normality

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov – Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Nationality	.169	20	.139	.863	20	.009
Total SA score	.105	20	.200*	.965	20	.649

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 5: test of normality

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov - Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Nationality	.169	20	.139	.863	20	.009
Overall_EI_score	.107	20	.200*	.964	20	.633

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 6: test of normality

From the above tables; table 2 – table 3 it is seen that the data are normally distributed with each p value being higher than 0.05.

Hypothesis testing

Correlation was used for the hypothesis testing;

	Nationality	Overall_EI_score	Overall_SA_score	Overall_SM_score	Overall_SOA_score	Overall_RM_score
Nationality Pearson's r Sig. 2tailed N	1 20					
Overall_EI_score Pearson's r Sig. 2tailed N	.038 .875 20	1 20				
Overall_SA_score Pearson's r Sig. 2tailed N	.000 1.000 20	.902** .000 20	1 20			
Overall_SM_score Pearson's r Sig. 2tailed N	-.080 .739 20	.919** .000 20	.792** .000 20	1 20		
Overall_SoA_score Pearson's r Sig. 2tailed N	-.101 .671 20	.859** .000 20	.751** .000 20	.794** .000 20	1 20	
Overall_RM_score Pearson's r Sig. 2tailed N	.294 .209 20	.749** .000 20	.556* .011 20	.512* .021 20	.501* .024 20	1 20

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2 tailed)

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

Table 7: Showing correlation among variables.

Result Analysis and Discussion

Culture has different forms, whether they are seen in the type of food we eat, the types of buildings we live in or in our beliefs and values, (Hofstede et al., 2011), it is therefore possible that being exposed to a variety of culture whether in your home country or overseas can have a huge impact on your emotional intelligence, (Crowne, 2013).

From the correlation table, it is seen that when nationality which was used to represent culture was correlated with emotional intelligence and the four factors, there was no significant value, in this research we reject hypothesis if there is a strong relationship between the correlated variables, that is we accept hypothesis if r is equals to or close to +1, this is further summarised; If $r = +.70$ or higher Very strong positive relationship; $+0.40$ to $+0.69$ Strong positive relationship; $+0.30$ to $+0.39$ Moderate positive relationship; $+0.20$ to $+0.29$ weak positive relationship; $+0.01$ to $+0.19$ No or negligible relationship; -0.01 to -0.19 No or negligible relationship; -0.20 to -0.29 weak negative relationship; -0.30 to -0.39 Moderate negative relationship; -0.40 to -0.69 Strong negative relationship; -0.70 or higher Very strong negative relationship.

When culture (nationality) was correlated with emotional intelligence, $r = 0.038$, based on the earlier paragraph there is a negligible relationship therefore we reject H1.

When culture (nationality) was correlated with the self awareness, $r = 0.00$, based on the earlier paragraph there is no relationship therefore we reject H2.

When culture (nationality) was correlated with self management, $r = -0.08$, based on the earlier paragraph there is no relationship therefore we reject H3.

When culture (nationality) was correlated with social awareness, $r = -0.101$, based on the earlier paragraph there is a negligible relationship therefore we reject H4.

When culture (nationality) was correlated with relationship management, $r = 0.294$, based on the earlier paragraph there is a weak positive relationship therefore we partially accept H5.

Based on the survey carried out and the method of analysis used, four of the five hypothesis generated were rejected that is indicating that culture had no effect on emotional intelligence, self awareness, self management and relationship management; this rejection of hypothesis developed is similar to the works of (Singh et al., 2012) where four out of six of the hypothesis tested were rejected. Although nationality was seen to have a weak relationship with relationship management, this is in accordance with the works of (Engle and Nehrt, 2011) where across relationship management varied among three countries used in their case study, this is also in line with Beckmam et al., (2009) where a relationship was seen between culture and relationship management.

CONCLUSION

There is a huge difference among various cultures and individuals, when university student studying project management were experimented on to check if their various cultural background had an effect on their emotional intelligence when working in teams, the result showed that culture has no influence on an individual's emotional intelligence when working with teams.

Based on this we can conclude in this research paper that an individual's emotional intelligence level is not governed by their culture but by the attitudinal characteristics or personality perspective of an individual.

Further research is encouraged due to the limitations in sample size and general sampling method used.

REFERENCE LIST

Beckman, T., Colwell, A. and Cunningham, P. H. (2009). 'The Emergence of Corporate Social Responsibility in Chile: The Importance of Authenticity and Social Networks', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 86, 191-206.

Crowne, K. A. (2013). 'Cultural exposure, emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence: An explanatory study', *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 13 (1), 5 – 13.

Dincer, H., Gencer, G., Orhan, N. and Sahinbas, K. (2011). 'The significance of emotional intelligence on the innovative work behaviour of managers as strategic decision – makers', *Procedia – Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 24, pp. 909 – 919.

Engle, R. and Nehrt, C. (2011). 'Conceptual ability, emotional intelligence and relationship management: A multinational study', *Journal of Management Policy and Practice*, 12 (4), pp. 58 – 72.

Gunkel, M., Schlägel, C. and Engle, R. L. (2013). 'Culture's influence on emotional intelligence: an empirical study of nine countries', *Journal of International Management*, 20, pp. 256 – 274.

Hofstede, G. H., Hofstede G. J. and Minkov, M. (2010). 'Cultures and organizations: software of the mind. inter - cultural cooperation and its importance for survival, 3rd editon, New York: McGraw-Hill.

Kulkarni, P. M., Janakiram, B. and Kumar, D. M. S. (2009). 'Emotional intelligence and employee performance as an indicator for promotion, a study of automobile industry in the city of Belgaum, Karnataka, India', *International Journal of Business and Management*, 4(4), pp. 161 – 170.

Muller, R. and Turner, R. (2010). 'Leadership competency profiles of successful project managers', *International Journal of Project Management*, 28, pp. 437 – 448.

Obradovic, V., Jovanovic, P, Petrovic, D., Mihic, M. and Mitrovic, Z. (2013). 'Project managers' intelligence – A ticket to success', *Procedia – Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 74, pp. 274 – 284.

Singh, M., Hii, L. and Lean, L. G. (2012). 'Evaluating the correlation between emotional intelligence (EI) and effective leadership (EL) among managers in Miri ship building industry', *International Conference on Economics, Business and Marketing Management*, 29.

Yang, L., Huang, C. and Wu, K. (2011). 'The association among project manager's leadership style, teamwork and project success', *International Journal of Project Management*, 29, pp. 258 – 267.