EXPO: Self-Development Training Program to Introduce Emotional Competence for First-Year Psychology Students

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ABSTRACT

Emotional competence is an influencing factor for an academic adjustment. Therefore, an orientation program facilitating those competency is needed for first-year students. The training was designed to help them understand emotional competence. This study examined whether the EXPO: Self Development Training Progam could improve knowledge about emotional competence. This study used pre-experimental design. Participants were all first-year students in psychology major (n=155; M=31; F=124), while emotional competence was assessed by using Goleman's Emotional Competence Inventory (R=.879). The Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to analyze before and after programs' data. There was a statistically significant knowledge improvement in the students' emotional competence following the EXPO program (z=−4.068, p<.05), with a medium effect size (r=.33) with the highest improvement found in empathy (z=9.248, p<.05, r=.75). The emotional competence intervention efficacy study should be offered to use a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) design to generalize the overall effectiveness of the intervention program.

Introduction

For some first-year university students, the transition from high school to their current university can be difficult, stressful, and very challenging that may change their life course . As Santrock stated, this transition includes the movement into a larger, more impersonal school structure; interactions with peers from more diverse geographical and ethnic backgrounds; an increased focus on overall achievement (Santrock, 2018). The first-year university becomes a critical phase for college adaptation as there may be many difficulties that develop in this phase (Clinciu, 2013). There might also be a reduction in parental support, changes in daily plans, higher expectations in academic and social contexts, and other adjustment-related issues (Wang & Hannes, 2014;

Tamannaeifar & Hesampour, 2016). Previous studies have also shown that the stress of managing emotions, developing autonomy, and fostering interpersonal relationships during this period (Jdaitawi, Ishak, & Mustafa, 2011) can lead to maladaptive behaviors (Tamannaeifar & Hesampour, 2016).

In Indonesia, a study on first-year students is needed due to the increasing number of university students every year and as the study on adjustment has become central issues for the first-year student (Malay & Nataningsih, 2020). The study of college adjustment becomes important because of the negative outcome that may arise such as anxiety and distress (Sari & Susanti, 2017). There is a commonality between first-year student adjustment in Indonesia and that in other countries: It needs personal-emotional and social skills for adjustment to anticipate negative outcomes that may appear because of maladjustment. Therefore, emotional intelligence is one of the psychological constructs explaining how to manage their own and others' emotion. It would be helpful for the first-year students to have this skill developed (Fernandez et al., 2012; Jdaitawi et al., 2011; Sim & Bang, 2016).

The studies about Emotional Intelligence (EI) intervention in Indonesia covers organizational setting (Risma, 2012), specific field of work setting as if police, babysitter, nurse (Khosasih, 2018; Lestari, Nasution, Siregar, Ginting, & Girsang, 2020; Muarif & Adiyanti, 2020), and other settings related to teenager as if orphanage and boy scout (Wijanarko, 2014; Wijaya, Putri, & Pandjaitan, 2020). The EI intervention was made to accomodate performance in work, psychological well-being, and character building but none of them made to accommodate academic adjustment. The EI interventions that have already been investigated have mostly not implied the same conceptual model

between assessment and intervention (Kotsou, Mikolajczak, Heeren, Grégoire, & Leys, 2019). The previous studies also lack important information on training content. Another suggestion for EI interventions is to encourage the researchers to design the EI intervention as part of the student orientation program (Wang & Hannes, 2014). This study is intended to accommodate those suggestions.

The content of the intervention is emotional competence which is derived from the emotional intelligence concept. Emotional intelligence was the concept introduced by Salovey and Mayer (1993), that is the ability to accurately assess one's own emotions and those of others in order to improve one's quality of life (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000). This EI concept was known as ability-based EI. In the same period, other academicians popularized emotional intelligence which are Reuven Bar-On and Daniel Goleman. The former academician develop a new concept: trait-based EI. It was defined as a constellation of emotional self-perceptions and also known as emotional self-efficacy (K. V. Petrides et al., 2016). On the other hand, Goleman defined emotional intelligence as the ability to recognize and manage the feelings of others in order to establish relationships and developed it in a practical situation (Goleman, 2000). From his study, the third model of EI emerged: an EI-based theory of performance. The third model is used frequently in the training session and practical situation but it has less empirical evidence compared to the two other models. Therefore, this study used Goleman's emotional competence framework and provided empirical evidence for his framework.

From the latest Goleman study, emotional intelligence was defined as the ability to motivate oneself, to handle frustrating situation, to control the emotional urge, to manage emotional state that is derived from self and social awareness
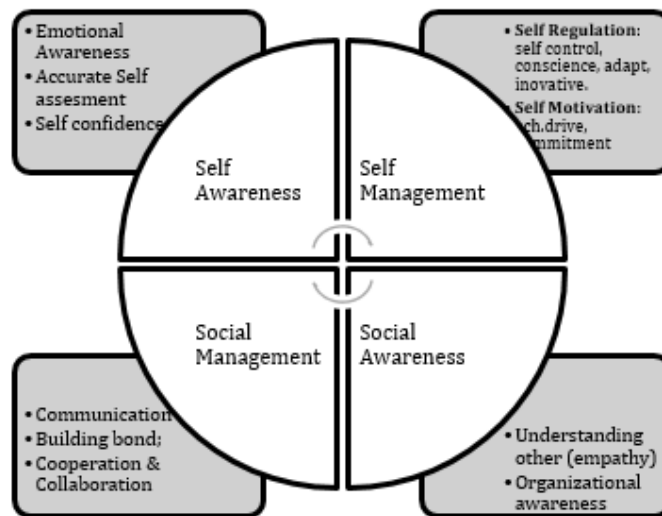
Figure 1. Emotional Competence Framework

also self and social management (Goleman, McKee, & Achor, 2017). From these five basic abilities, Goleman conceptualized the *Emotional Competence Framework* defined as an individual's capability based on emotional intelligence. This competence will help them to "do well" in everyday life (Goleman, 2000). Emotional competence (EC) was understood as a group of generic skills that can be applied to many types of emotion-related skills. There was a difference between EI and EC which was the emphasis of EI primarily on in-born ability while the EC emphasizes the skills acquired through cultural and contextual interferences as one develops (Lau & Wu, 2012). The emotional competence framework consists of five clusters that include main dimensions. Out of those dimensions, there are 25 competencies (subdimensions) that consist of both personal competencies and social competencies. In this study, we only included 13 competencies according to the result of the training needing assessment (see Figure 1).

The intervention main objective is "first-year psychology students understand what is emotional competence and how to use it in university life". This objective is in cognitive domain understanding level based on Bloom taxonomy. It was designed to encourage students summarizing what they know about emotional competence and how to execute them in academic, social, and organization situations (Darwazeh & Branch, 2015). Therefore, experiential learning framework was used to help students actively construct their own knowledge about emotional competence (McCarthy, 2016).

Experiential learning explains how individuals learn in their own way as they react to individual perceptions of experiences throughout their lives. What they learn and how they learn are very particular to each individual (Yardley, Teunissen, & Dornan, 2012). The concept popularized by David Kolb (1984) has six principles which are (1) The best learning is conceived as a process, focused on engaging students in a process; (2) Relearning principle; (3) The learning process is driven by conflict, differences; (4) Learning is a holistic process; (5) Learning results from the dynamic interaction between the person and environment; and (6) Learning is the process of creating knowledge (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).
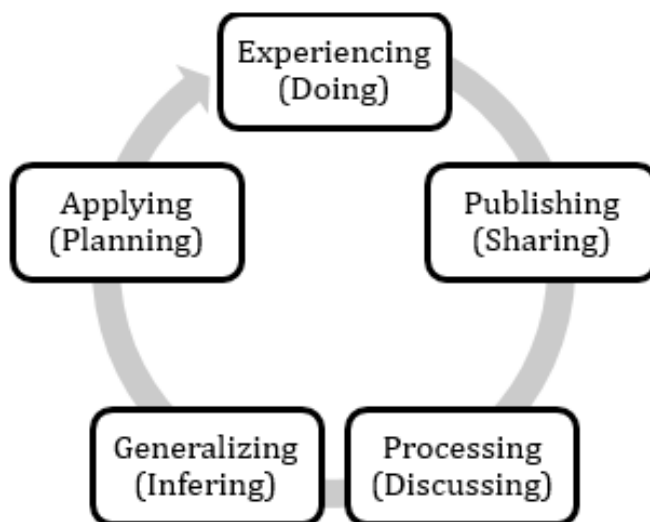
Figure 2. Experiential Learning Cycle (Biech & Pfeiffer & Company, 2010)

Pfeiffer and Jones adapted David Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory for a practical purpose, which is called the Experiential Learning Cycle: experiencing, publishing, processing, generalizing, and applying. The activities designed with The Experiential learning cycle framework must have specific learning objectives. Those objectives were based on the training need assessment from participants. To ensure that the learning process went well, facilitators needed to prepare their skills. The most important skill needed to be mastered was the questioning technique. This experiential learning cycle, led by the facilitator, assists participants to process the activity, to internalize the learning, and to relate it to their day - to - day situations (Biech & Pfeiffer & Company., 2010).

Many previous studies indicated that it is possible to improve EI both ability-based EI and trait-based EI (Brasseur, Grégoire, Bourdu, & Mikolajczak, 2013; Kotsou, Mikolajczak, Heeren, Grégoire, & Leys, 2019; Schutte, Malouff, & Thorsteinsson, 2013). The EI intervention in education setting was done in a lot of education stages: social-emotional learning (SEL) program embedded in the curriculum, the lecture which was the part of university introductory class, and various training programs (Brackett, Rivers, Reyes, & Salovey, 2012; Dumitriu, Timofti, & Dumitriu, 2014; Jdaitawi et al., 2011; Nelis et al., 2011). The EI intervention for university students is mostly trained to medical or nursing students with the reason that those students will interact with many people, the patients. Meanwhile, the intervention for psychology students, who will also have many interactions with people, is limited.

This study was mainly concerned with whether the EXPO (Experience Psychology Together) self-development training program for first-year students improves the knowledge of emotional competence from emotional intelligence construct. The outcome measurement was the emotional intelligence itself and the training was designed for the first-year student of the psychology major. This study also described training content and evaluated the process based on the experiential learning cycle. Since the EI intervention related study is mainly investigated in Europe, this study will contribute to empirical evidence of EI Intervention, especially in South East Asia.

Methodology

The EXPO Program: Self Development Training

Faculty of Psychology at Universitas Padjadjaran in Indonesia has established its own set of competencies for each university year. Known as *Student Life*, the set of competencies includes initiative, empathy, emotional independence, self-regulation, responsibility, and creativity. According to *Student Life,* first-year students need to be introduced to the four dimensions of emotional intelligence. Based on Goleman's Emotional Competence Inventory (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2001; Goleman et al., 2017), each competency has been contextualized into academic, social, and organizational aspects. However, in order to embed such competencies into the students, a training program was necessary. Thus, the *EXPO* (Experience Psychology Together) program was introduced to first-year psychology students in 2017 to help them understand emotional competence (Appendix 1).

EXPO program is a new program. Therefore, it becomes a "pilot project" to develop yearly students orientation program for first-year students. Overall, the EXPO program is a two-day self-development training program administered annually to first-year psychology students during student orientation program. According to the objectives, the EXPO program focuses on two aspects: the students' knowledge about what is emotional competence and how to use them in students' life (Brasseur et al., 2013). Each activity was based on the dimensions and sub-dimensions of Goleman's Emotional Competence Inventory for the students to apply certain competencies (e.g., *self-confidence*, *communication*, *emotional self-control*, etc.) in semi-real situations and discuss their findings in the debriefing sessions.

Research Design

Pre-experimental design with single-group before and after was used to evaluate the EXPO program and identify any differences between the before and after treatment. Pre-experimental design was choosen in order to explore wether this intervention has the potential to cause change. This study will become useful foundation to decide wether an experiment should be taken (Frey, 2018). In this study, pre-tests were administered a week before the program, while post-tests were conducted a week after the program. A descriptive non-experimental design was also used to evaluate the experiential learning process in every activity.

Participants

This study used a non-probability sampling design: convenience sampling. We used all students who participated in the EXPO Programme. The participants consisted of 155 students (M = 31; F = 124; ages 18 to 20), all of whom were first-year psychology students at Universitas Padjadjaran in 2017. This study was a part of the student executive board's project and conducted with permission from the vice-dean of psychology.

Instruments

In order to measure the students' emotional competence, assessments were made according to Goleman's Emotional Competence framework consisting of *self-awareness* (consist of 2 sub-dimensions)*, self-management* (consist of 6 sub-dimensions)*, social awareness* (consist of 2 sub-dimensions)*, and social management* (consist of 3 sub-dimensions)*.* The items were developed in 4 (four) contexts: academic context (16 items), social context (34 items), organizational context (17 items), and intrapersonal context (12 items). All of the items were rated on an eight-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (never experienced/

never do/not related at all) to 8 (always experienced/always do/very related). Regarding internal reliability, Cronbach's alpha for the assessment tool was .879.

This study also used the second instrument: The Experiential Learning Observation Form (The EL Form), which was developed by two assistants of educational psychologists. The EL Form consists of checklist behavior for each experiential learning cycle. The experiential learning cycle consists of 5 phases: experiencing, publishing, processing, generalizing, and applying. The experiential learning was effective if all of the behaviors in at least 4 phases were ticked.

Data Collection

The emotional competence data was collected with cooperation from the student executive board using *google form.* The pretest data were collected one week before the program, and the posttest data were collected three weeks after the program. The evaluation of the experiential learning process was made by training facilitators who had attended a training on experiential learning. The contents of the training for the facilitators were what experiential learning is, how to conduct a structured experience using the experiential learning cycle, what technique is used in each learning cycle, and how to evaluate the effectiveness of each learning cycle. This training lasted for three months including a role-play activity both for running the activity and evaluating the process.

On the day of the training, the facilitators shared the roles into two: as a lead facilitator and as an observer. The one who collected the data on the experiential learning process was the observer. In other words, the observer had a task to fill The Experiential Learning Observation Form (The EL Form). They observed the participants and ticked the cheklists of the occurrence of behaviors for each experiential learning cycle. After finishing each activity, the observed facilitators discussed the conclusion of the experiential learning process with the lead facilitators.

Data Analyses

To examine the overall impact of the EXPO program on the students' emotional competence, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to determine the mean differences within the paired groups (before and after the program). Moreover, the descriptive qualitative analyses were conducted to analyze the data in each activity from The Experiential Learning Observation Form. Overall, there were 22 groups, each of which consisted of 11 to 12 students, and a facilitator. There were also lead facilitators that provided general instructions on each activity and offered feedback to the group facilitators. Before the program, all of the facilitators completed approximately three months of training, which included giving instructions, role-playing, observing, and facilitating the debriefing sessions. At the end of each day of the program, the facilitators discussed the experiential learning process and identified which sub-dimensions/ process had to be improved on the next day.

Results and Discussion

The study was intended to find the effectiveness of EXPO program to improve psychology first-year students' knowledge about emotional competence. In this section, the empirical evidence will be provided both overall emotional competence and per dimension. The empirical evidence is derived from the emotional competence questionnaire and an experiential learning observation form. How the emotional competence improved and implied to practices situation will also be described.

The Improvement of Emotional Competence

The results of the pre- and post-tests were analyzed to identify any improvements before and after the training program. Median scores were used to describe any differentiations in the data, while the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was employed to conclude the findings.

Table 1
Pre- and Post-Test Results Regarding the Students' Emotional Competence

	n	**Median**	**Range**	*Z*
Pre-Test	152	5.5000	2.80	−4.068*
Post-Test	152	5.7000	4.70	

*Note: * Significance level of .05.*

According to Table 1, there was a significant improvement in the students' emotional competence, based on the pre- and post-tests. Moreover, the results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed that the students' emotional competence in the post-tests (*Mdn* = 5.7) was higher than that in the pre-tests (*Mdn* = 5.5), Z = 4.068, p < .05, r = .33). The effect size was medium. It could be interpretted that there were some parts of the training that were effective while some others were not.

The improvement of emotional competence was influenced by the structure experiences and the activities designed specifically for each sub-dimension/competency. Each activity was conducted based on Pfeiffer's Experiential Learning Cycle. The Experiencing consisted of activity instruction and activity completion. The Publishing was when participants shared their experience: what they thought, what they did, and what they felt during the activity. The Processing was when the facilitator helped participants to give a meaning inexperienced activity. The Generalization was when the participants concluded what

they learned and how these insights applied in everyday life. The Applying was when the facilitator guided participants to make an action plan, to make a plan for improving their skills related to each emotional competence subdimension. The essentials of each subdimension would not be delivered to participants if the cycle was uncompleted. Therefore, it was important to evaluate the completeness of the experiential learning cycle in each activity.

The activities with a complete experiential learning cycle were the ones for empathy, commitment, and communication (part of social awareness and social management dimension) (see Appendix 2). Meanwhile, the most incomplete cycle was the "*Kereta Kata*" for emotional self-control subdimensions (part of self-management dimension). The rest of which was interpreted as "safe" because the participants could find the meaning of each subdimension but failed to apply them cognitively. The dynamic of complete/incomplete learning cycle will be described in each relevant dimension.

The Improvement of Self-Awareness

The first dimension of emotional competence is self-awareness. Self-awareness is an ability to be aware of their feelings and emotions, understanding why those feelings and emotions emerged, an understanding of how those feelings and emotions affected their behavior (Goleman et al., 2017). This dimension consists of 3 sub-dimensions: (1) Emotional awareness, identifying their emotions and how the impact is; (2) Accurate self-assessment, knowing accurately and objectively both strengths and weaknesses; and (3) Self-confidence, believing in their worthiness. The EXPO program only facilitated the second and third competencies because of the need assessment results. There was no indication that emotional awareness was needed by first-year students.

As shown in Table 2, only *self-confidence* significantly increased after the training program (Z = 3.567, p < .05, r = .29). The "*Membebek"* activity was used to increase self-confidence. According to Table 3, *Membebek* fulfilled four learning cycles but did not succeed to fulfill the applying phase. Therefore the effect size was the only medium, which means that the students understood the feeling of confidence but failed to find how to apply it in real-life situations. On the other hand, *Membebek* activity did not contain all important aspect to enable learner self-confidence. There are three important aspects which are make adaptive attributions for "success" and "failure"; develop realistic "doubt" situation to stimulate development of epistemic authority; and engage learners in constructive discussion regarding the accuracy of learners' judgement about their capability (Maclellan, 2014). The imitation challenge in *Membebek* only facilitate emerging of "doubt" situation (e.g "can I express myself uniquely?"). We suggest a revision for this structured experience activity so that it can covers all three important aspect to understand and enable learner self-confidence.

There was no difference in Accurate self-assessment before and after The EXPO program. This happened because, theoretically, accurate self-assessment is the competency that is predetermined by another competency (i.e. emotional awareness). Understanding how our belief or value affects the emotion we feel, and 'naming' the emotion becomes the foundation to accurately identify our strengths, weaknesses, and relevant strategies for life (Dumitriu et al., 2014; Pekrun, 2006). Therefore, theoretically, emotional awareness subdimension need to be included in The EXPO Program in order to help students undertand about accurate self-assessment subdimension.

The Improvement of Self-Management

The second dimension is self-management. Self-management is an ability to control their feelings and emotions, to express them inappropriately, and an ability to manage energy and emotion to produce something beneficial. This ability includes focusing on a task, commitment to do tasks, finding alternative ways to finish the task, delaying gratification, and keeping the effort constantly.

This dimension consists of 6 sub-dimensions: (1) Self-control, managing feelings, and needs; (2) Conscientiousness, taking responsibility in every action; (3) Adaptability, flexibility when situations change; (4) Innovativeness, feeling comfortable and open to new ideas; (5) Achievement drive, working hard to develop and attaining good quality based on their knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses; and (6) Commitment, balancing personal goals with a group goal and persience to attain them.

Table 2

Analysis of Self-Awareness Dimension

Dimension/Sub-dimensions	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Z
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	
Self-Awareness					
Self-Confidence	5.1240	.63132	5.7124	.79508	−3.567*
Accurate Self-Assessment	5.7468	.62676	5.2373	.74771	−1.081

* Differences were considered statistically significant at the .05 significance level.

Table 3 shows that 4 out of the 6 sub-dimensions significantly increased after the training program, including: *commitment* (Z = 2.570, p < .05, r = .208); *adaptability* (Z = 2.046, p < .05, r = .17); *achievement drive* (Z = 2.29, p < .05, r = .19); and *innovativeness* (Z = 5.143, p < .05, r = .42). The structure experiences for this sub-dimensions were the *Don't Say the Piip* and *Bola Keranjang* activities for *commitment*; the *Galih dan Ratna* activity for *adaptability*; and the *Hunting Numbers* activity for *achievement.*

Although there were no specific activities for *innovativeness*, this competency was instinctively nurtured during each activity, since the students had to apply diverse techniques to achieve the specific goals. Innovative environemnt can be nurtured by rich internal and external social network (Parlar, Polatcan, & Cansoy, 2019). In this program, internal social network is between first-year students meanwhile external social network are the facilitators and the training organizers. Rich social network means that the interactions have high intensity to share new ideas and knowledge, to discuss new strategy, and to give constructive feedback. This situations occur throughout two-days-training.

There was no difference in emotional self-control before and after The EXPO program. In addition, Emotional self-control was delivered by the "*Kereta Kata*". This structure experience activity failed to deliver the experiential learning cycle completely. In *Kereta Kata*, the participants concluded other concepts (e.g. teamwork, empathy, communication) besides emotional self-control. On the other hand, *Kereta Kata* as a structured experience was a "team game" while emotional self-control was a personal competence. Team-based structured experience activity will develop team-related skills when the members of the team intentionally focused on doing it (Kayes, Kayes, & Kolb, 2005). Therefore the *Kereta Kata* failed to accomplish emotional self-control learning objectives.

Meanwhile, there was also no difference on conscientiousness. There was no specific structure experience for this sub-dimension because it was assumed that this competency could be indicated by students' attendance in that whole training program. This data showed that our assumptions were incorrect. On the other hand, previous studies defined conscientiousness as a personality trait, not as a competency (Kertechian, 2018). Conscientiousness mature along life span development. In the education context, changes in conscientiousness could be achieve by changes in school climate (e.g academic

Table 3

Analysis of Self-Management Dimension

Dimension/Sub-dimensions	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Z
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	
Self-Management					
Emotional Self-Control	5.2558	.51259	5.1954	.65748	−.029
Commitment	4.2948	.33642	4.3307	.48277	−2.570*
Conscientiousness	5.8890	.62597	5.8732	.74895	−.407
Adaptability	5.9461	.55225	5.9778	.73826	−2.046*
Achievement Drive	5.5130	.61588	5.5536	.73180	−2.290*
Innovativeness	5.3844	.73521	5.6288	.82770	−5.143*

* Differences were considered statistically significant at the .05 significance level.

Table 4

Analysis of Social Awareness Dimension

Dimension/Sub-dimensions	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Z
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	
Social Awareness					
Empathy	5.0799	.45781	5.8327	1.03922	−9.248*

* Differences were considered statistically significant at the .05 significance level.

support form lecturer, encouragement from stakeholder and peer) (Tackman, Srivastava, Pfeifer, & Dapretto, 2017). Therefore it was not possible to change conscientiousness through a 2-day training.

The Improvement of Social Awareness

The third dimension is social awareness. Social awareness is the ability to recognize, identify, and understand others' feelings and emotions. This dimension consists of 2 sub-dimensions: (1) Understanding other (Empathy), understanding others feeling and perspective, having an interest to what others feel/think; and (2) Organizational awareness, reading group and organization emotional dynamic. The EXPO program only facilitated Understanding other (Empathy) competency because of the need assessment results. There was no indication that organizational awareness was needed by first-year students.

As shown in Table 4, *empathy* significantly increased after the training program (Z = 9.248, p < .05, r = .75). Empathy was delivered by the "*Broken Square"* and "*Injak Bumi".* These structured experience activities completed all experiential learning cycles. The difference was the completion of the Applying step. In the Applying step, the participant would plan the effective behavior for one week related to the competencies. Planning and acting that effective behavior required commitment and involvement in practical situations (Kolb & Kolb, 2009). The "*Broken Square"* and "*Injak Bumi"* require sharp observation and initiative from each member of the group. They need to cooperate without talking to each other. The activity that requires cooperation tends to improve empathy and assertiveness (López-Mondéjar & Pastor, 2017). Therefore, the structure experience activities designed for empathy were right.

The Improvement of Social Management

The fourth dimension is social management. Social management is the ability to handle emotions to maintain good interpersonal relationships. This dimension consists of three sub-dimensions: (1) Communication, sending and retrieving an accurate message; (2) Building bonds, having an initiative and always maintaining good interpersonal relationships; and (3) Cooperation & collaboration, working with others toward a certain goal.

As shown in Table 5, it was only *communication* that significantly increased after the training program (Z = 1.979, p < .05, r = .16). The "Find Me!" activity was used to improve communication. According to Table 3, *"Find Me!"* fulfills all experiential learning cycle. The completion of the learning experience indicated that the participants not only understood good communication but also know how to use this competency in real-life situations. Communication skill was one of the skills that can be higher after a short period of training, especially for medical and psychology students (Tiuraniemi, Läärä, Kyrö, & Lindeman, 2011). The improvement mostly happen in the knowledge after

Table 5

Analysis of Social Management Dimension

Dimension/Sub-dimensions	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Z
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	
Social Management					
Communication	5.5721	.65783	5.6222	.83455	−.1979*
Building Bonds	6.0552	.67930	5.9484	.85225	−.565
Collaboration and Cooperation	6.1084	.62319	6.0797	.77556	−1.000

* Differences were considered statistically significant at the .05 significance level.

attending short time training period ranging from 30 minute until 2 hours for eight days (Omura, Maguire, Levett-Jones, & Stone, 2017). Therefore, this structure experience activity *"Find Me!"* can be used in a two-day training which the objectives are in understanding level of cognitive domain. Meanwhile, there was no difference on buiding bonds and cooperation & collaboration subdimension. Previous study show that one-day training can only demonstrate improvement of knowledge and attitude toward working together while teamwork skill do not change (Hobgood et al., 2010).

Applying for Practices

Emotional competence consists of personal competence and social competence. Taken this nature of competence into consideration, the structured experiences must be designed according to them. Personal competence should be delivered through self-related activities and social competence should be delivered through team-based activities. The design for each experiential learning cycle must also be considered and well planned. The facilitators have to acquire related skills to deliver each activity.

Particular activities such as: the *Broken Square, Bola Keranjang, Find Me!,* and *Injak Bumi* could be used as they are, without any modification. Meanwhile,

the *Kereta Kata* had to be replaced with a new activity for emotional self-control and the *Membebek* need to be adapted so that covering all important aspects of self-confidence. The finding of this study would help academicians and practicioners in higher education to foster emotional competence among the first-year students in the following ways: to improve knowledge on empathy: how to understand others and to improve knowledge about how to communicate effectively with new environment.

The EXPO Program was designed to introduce emotional competence that may help them to adjust in university. From this study, we find that not all competencies are suitable for first-year students. Personal competence should be prioritize than social competence although the later still needed by freshman especially for empathy and communication skill. Thus, we recommend self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness dimension as the contents of training program. However, not all subdimension in those three dimensions can be trained in students orientation program such as innovativeness, conscientiousness, and adaptability. This study also limited to improving knowledge and understanding level of emotional competence.

Conclusion

The study main objective was to investigate wether the EXPO Program can improve psychology first-year students' knowlege about emotional competence and describe how the improvement happened through the experiential learning cycle. There are three main issues discussed in this study. The first issue is implying the same conceptual model between assessment and intervention. The EXPO program was designed to accomodate this issue. From the training objectives, training activity, and training evaluation were developed based on Goleman's Emotional Competence Framework. The second issue is regarding important information on training content. This study describe not only about overall training procedure but also structured expereinces (training activities) used. It may be used in the future training program and any EI related program. The effective training activities are "Broken Square"; "Bola Keranjang"; and "Injak Bumi" therefore we can reuse them. Those issues will help other scholars to replicate not only the research study but also the training program.

The third issue, and also the most important issue in this study, is exploring whether The EXPO Program has the potential to cause change so that an experiment could be taken. This study found that the EXPO Program was effective to improve students' knowledge and understanding about emotional competence. Moreover, out of the 13 sub-dimensions of emotional competence, the following seven sub-dimensions showed significant improvements with the *empathy* as the sub-dimensions with the highest improvement. However, the training periods need to be prolonged if we aim to improve more than the knowledge of emotional competence.

It was important to mention two limitations of this study. First, the EXPO program was only administered to introduce emotional competence over a period of two days. It was designed only to improve understanding level of cognitive. Some modifications are needed if we want to improve students' skill of emotional competence. Thus, future studies should design the training program that facilitating skill improvement. Second, this is only pilot study so that further investigation needed .

This study suggested that a Randomized Controlled Trial design be used to generalize the effectiveness of the intervention in improving students' understanding. It also suggests to have a correlational study between The EXPO Program and academic adjustment. The correlation study will help to prove the importance of emotional competence on first-year students' adjustment. On the other hand, if the stakeholder intends to improve more than the understanding level about emotional competence (e.g applying level in Bloom taxonomy), The EXPO program need to be adapt especially in training period methods.

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Appendix 1.

Structure of the EXPO Program

Activity	Description	Sub-dimensions
Mem" Bebek"	Each group is subdivided into two groups of six to seven students. Each student in the first group then presents a challenge for each student in the second group and vice versa. Each challenge must be presented in a manner that can be imitated by the recipient. Each challenge also has to be "unique". Facilitators encourage students to be expressive. For every correct imitation, the student receives one point. *Mem" Bebek"* itself means to imitate.	*Self-Confidence*
Galih dan Ratna	The students have presented a story. The story is about lovers who have a long-distance relationship and one day the woman has to meet the man. On the journey, the woman meets several men and experiences some conflicted problem. The woman experiences many negative results because of this problem. After reading the story, they are asked to openly discuss the characters with one another and rank them from most to least guilty.	*Adaptability* *Communication*
Kereta Kata	The students are asked to stretch their arms and hands out to their sides and then forward. In between these movements, they are asked to enunciate a previously memorized sentence. Each student in the group needs to spoke out the words in a sentence orderly. The students are also not permitted to say their respective words at the same time.	*Emotional Self-Control*
Broken Square	Each student receives an envelope with several puzzle pieces. However, the pieces will not form a full square if they are not exchanged with the other students. The students are not allowed to communicate with one another. They have to observe every member's non-verbal signs and puzzle pieces. The group will succeed if all the members finishing their square.	*Empathy*
Don't Say the Piip	The students are asked to solve a case by using the given clues. However, the clues are not completed so they need to get an extra clue to solve the problem. To get an extra clue, they need to explain what clues needed without saying the 'forbidden word' (the"Piip").	*Commitment* *Communication*
Bola Keranjang	The students are grouped in pairs and asked to use ropes in their waists to form a cross-shaped path. At the center of the path is a basket. The students are then asked to dribble a ball in the path and throw it into the basket. Each student will get a point when throwing the ball into the basket. Before doing the game, each student decides how many points they want to be collected.	*Commitment* *Collaboration and Cooperation*
Find Me!	The students are given a clue that will direct them to a previously appointed location. If they successfully find the location, then the facilitator will ask them to solve a riddle. Solving riddle requires the participation of all members of the group.	*Communication* *Building Bonds*
Hunting Numbers	Each student is given a piece of paper with random numbers written on it. After that, they are asked to draw a line, linking the numbers orderly (1 until 30) with a pencil or a pen. This game consists of three sessions, with each session presenting a different set of numbers. Every session, they have to determine the target number. They can choose to change or not to change their target number in every session.	*Achievement Drive*
Injak Bumi	Every group consists of six to eight students. Each group is given a 90 cm x 60 cm banner. Each student is asked to get on the banner and hold themselves up with their arms and legs. This activity is considered a success when the student holds his/her position for five seconds. After succeeding, the banner will be folded and all the members' bodies must be on the banner. This activity will be repeated until the banner folded four times.	*Empathy*

Appendix 2.

Experiential Learning Cycle Checklist for The EXPO Program

Activity	Sub-dimensions	Experiencing	Publishing	Processing	Generalizing	Applying
Membebek	*Self-Confidence*	√	√	√	√	
Galih dan Ratna	*Adaptability*	√	√	√	√	-
	Communication	√	√	√	√	-
Kereta Kata	*Emotional Self-Control*	√	√	√	-	-
Broken Square	*Empathy*	√	√	√	√	√
Don't Say the Piip	*Commitment*	√	√	√	√	-
	Communication	√	√	√	√	-
Bola Keranjang	*Commitment*	√	√	√	√	√
	Collaboration and Cooperation	√	√	√	√	-
Find Me!	*Communication*	√	√	√	√	√
	Building Bonds	√	√	√	√	-
Hunting Numbers	*Achievement Drive*	√	√	√	√	-
Injak Bumi	*Empathy*	√	√	√	√	√