Developing Measurement Model of Interpersonal Skills of Youth

Mohd Yusri Ibrahim

Abstract—Although it is known that interpersonal skills are essential for personal development, the debate however continues as to how to measure those skills, especially in youths. This study was conducted to develop a measurement model of interpersonal skills by suggesting three construct namely personal, skills and relationship; six function namely self, perception, listening, conversation, emotion and conflict management; and 30 behaviours as indicators. This cross-sectional survey by questionnaires was applied in east side of peninsula of Malaysia for 150 respondents, and analyzed by structural equation modelling (SEM) by AMOS. The suggested constructs, functions and indicators were consider accepted as measurement elements by observing on regression weight for standard loading, average variance extracted (AVE) for convergent validity, square root of AVE for discriminant validity, composite reliability (CR), and at least three fit indexes for model fitness. Finally, a measurement model of interpersonal skill for youth was successfully developed.

Keywords—Interpersonal communication, interpersonal skill, youth.

I. INTRODUCTION

EXPECTATIONS are high regarding the interpersonal communication skills of youths. As important citizens in the future, they are expected to be able to adapt themselves to constantly changing situations and interactive relationships, such as family, friendship, neighbourhood/community, negotiation with others, working in group, handling conflict situations etc. Interpersonal communication occurs in relationships between individuals as a result of cooperation between different parties [1], and it is formed by cognitive, skill-related and affective aspects [2], which are needed and crucial skills for youths.

Our world is changing quickly these days, as do the ways to communicate [3], especially among youths. The last few years have seen the rapid increase in the use of virtual mediums to communicate such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp and so on intelligence software. Many forms of media-based behaviours that are common among youth such watching television, playing passive video games, talking on the phone or texting, and playing on the computer are considered to be sedentary behaviours [4], inactive in real interpersonal interaction between families, peer, neighbours and others. Research has demonstrated that these types of sedentary behaviours tend to be established during youth [5], [6]. This situation, on other hand, affects our youth in

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interpersonal skills capability. Many of the youth of today are lacking in face-to-face interpersonal communication skills, for example in conversation, listening, self-disclosure, perceive, and facing problem to handle emotion and manage conflict between them and others. This study aims to a develop measurement model of interpersonal skills, in order to campaign and encourage them to be an effective individual in interpersonal communication.

II. BACKGROUND

Interpersonal communication competence is constructed by the cooperation of the different participants in interaction and it is closely related to the topics of respecting others, tolerating differences and being ready for personal development [1]. Being an individual with best communication skills seems to be based on five interpersonal elements [7]. (1) An satisfactory self-concept, the most important criteria that affecting individual's communication ability; (2) the ability to be an effective listener, an active process to get ideas from others; (3) the skill to express thoughts and ideas clearly especially in conversation, which many people find hard to practice; (4) being able to cope with emotions especially angry feelings, and expressing them to a constructive way; and (5) the willingness to make self-disclosure to others truthfully and freely.

Decades of communication research reflects the ideas and thought how to help people to enhance their communication skills, especially in interpersonal situation. The importance of effective interpersonal interaction for healthy human functioning has been demonstrated by a substantial body of studies [8]-[10]. High-quality of interpersonal relationships, and the sense of relatedness that they cultivate, support positive individual outcomes in several ways [11].

In order to enhance interpersonal communication skills, researchers suggest various approaches such as the other-oriented approach, emphasis on diversity, emphasis on relationship, and emphasis on technology among interpersonal relationship [12]. In these approaches, the individual needs to focus on others rather than self, although they need not abandon their own thoughts, feelings and behaviours. They need to be self-aware as well as aware others, instead the mindful process of considering the thoughts, needs, feelings and values of others.

Interpersonal skill is about aspects of cognitive, skill-related and affective [2]. The cognitive aspect is about the idea that the communicator knows and understands what effective interpersonal communication requires and what is expected by it. The skill-related aspect refers to displaying appropriate,

effective and functional behaviour in any given situation and interpersonal communication relationship. The affective aspect includes the motivation, feelings and attitudes of participants [2].

To gain an effective interpersonal communication, individual needs knowledge about self-disclosure, skills in action, and dynamics in relationship [3]. Ideally, follows these components, being a human with effective interpersonal skills seems to be based on six main elements namely the concept of self-disclosure, ability in perceived situations, skill in conversation and listening, ability to control self-emotion, and how to manage conflict constructively. These skills not only affect individual relationships, but also influence their general health, happiness, and quality of life.

In recent years, several research techniques and applications have been developed in a number of areas involving the study of interpersonal communication such as marriage counselling, parent-child counselling, group therapy, small-group communication, teacher-pupils interaction, peer friendships, in organisation interaction etc. The aim of this study is to develop a computational measurement model to identify and measure the capability of interpersonal skills among youth. The skills will be observed using 30 indicators that hypothesized representing the behaviours of best interpersonal communication skills.

III. HYPOTHESIS MODEL

Referring to previous studies [3], [12], [1], [7], the hypothesis model, as in Fig. 1, was proposed for the study.
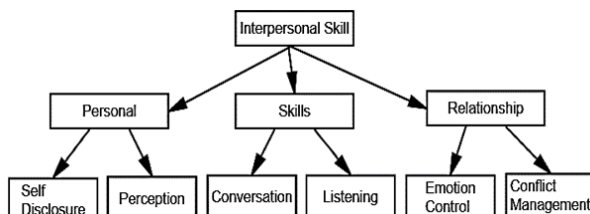

Fig. 1 Hypothesis model

Interpersonal skills among youth will be measured using the three main components namely personal, skills and relationship. All of these components have been identified as key factors that determine the effectiveness of interpersonal communication among youth. Then, six elements such self-disclosure, perception, conversation, listening, emotional control and conflict management were identified and suggested as constructs for every component. In order to explain all the variables, 30 indicators and behaviours will be measured using the item of questionnaire.

IV. METHODS

The study was applied cross-sectional design by quantitative approach. Research respondents were 150 students from a higher educational institution on the east side of the peninsula of Malaysia, selected using purposive sampling method. Data were collected using four response

scale questionnaires with 30 items to measure the six constructs namely self-disclosure, perception, listening, conversation, emotion control and conflict management. The data was analysed using SEM approach by AMOS 20 software focusing on standard loading, convergent validity, CR, discriminant validity and fit indexes. The item, construct and variables of the model will be accepted when regression weight for every standard loading are 0.708 and above, AVE for convergent validity are 0.5 and above, CR are 0.708 and above, square root AVE for discriminant validity greater than value of correlation between item and between construct [13]. The model also assume as fit when at least one fix index from each category namely basic, relative and parsimony was achieved where CMIN ratio < 5, CFI and NFI > 0.9, PCFI and PNFI > 0.5, and RMSEA < 0.1 [14].

V. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The preliminary results show that all the constructs were at the medium level, which are approximately scores of three from maximum of five. The findings also obtained acceptable values for skewness and kurtosis which mean all the variables were at a normal distribution and parametric testing can be done. The preliminary results are shown in Table I.

TABLE I
PRELIMINARY RESULT

Construct	Mean	Sd	Skew	Kurt
(1)Interpersonal	3.09	0.06	0.01	-0.06
(2)Skill	3.02	0.07	0.06	-0.53
(3)Relationship	3.12	0.05	-0.04	0.54
(4)Personal	3.12	0.05	0.00	-0.19
(5)Listening	3.11	0.09	0.03	-0.53
(6)Conversation	2.92	0.06	0.08	-0.52
(7)Conflict	3.06	0.05	0.12	1.60
(8)Perception	2.99	0.06	-0.01	0.03
(9)Self	3.25	0.05	0.01	-0.40
(10)Emotion	3.19	0.06	-0.20	-0.52

The results also show that all constructs were strength correlated between each other. Table II shows the inter-correlation between constructs. Meanwhile, all the measurements of convergent validity via AVE, reliability via CR, and discriminant validity via square root of AVE were achieved, while all the standard loading, as shown in Fig. 2, scored 0.701 and above. This confirms that all the indicators and constructs that were suggested for interpersonal skills variable are valid and reliable, as shown in Table III.

Fig. 2 shows the final model of interpersonal skills which includes the 30 indicators, six elements and three components. All the suggested items were accepted as reflected to the suggested elements, while the six suggested elements also reflected to the components of personal, skills and relationship, which also reflected to the variable of interpersonal skills with 0.87 and above of standard loading score. Meanwhile, the fixed indexes, also shown the model, were fit.

To sum up, the study succeeded in developing a measurement model of interpersonal skills among youth, as

shown in the final model presented in Fig. 2.

TABLE II
INTER-CONSTRUCT CORRELATION

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(1)Interpersonal	1.00									
(2)Skill	0.80	1.00								
(3)Relationship	0.88	0.93	1.00							
(4)Personal	0.94	0.95	0.82	1.00						
(5)Listening	0.93	0.88	0.82	0.87	1.00					
(6)Conversation	0.70	0.66	0.62	0.66	0.58	1.00				
(7)Conflict	0.75	0.80	0.86	0.70	0.70	0.53	1.00			
(8)Perception	0.79	0.85	0.70	0.85	0.74	0.56	0.60	1.00		
(9)Self	0.74	0.79	0.65	0.79	0.69	0.52	0.55	0.67	1.00	
(10)Emotion	0.71	0.75	0.81	0.66	0.66	0.50	0.69	0.56	0.52	1.00
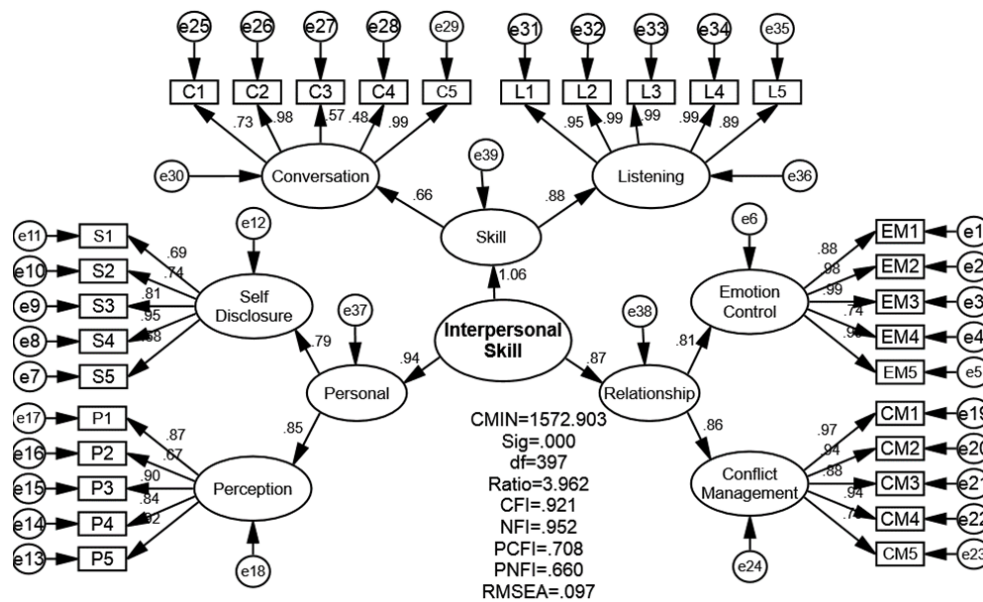
Fig. 2 Final model

TABLE III
CONVERGENT VALIDITY, CR AND DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

Construct	AVE	CR	√AVE
Interpersonal skill	0.925	0.974	0.962
Personal	0.668	0.801	0.817
Skill	0.603	0.749	0.777
Relationship	0.695	0.820	0.834
Self	0.608	0.884	0.780
Perception	0.716	0.926	0.846
Listening	0.930	0.985	0.964
Conversation	0.608	0.878	0.780
Emotion	0.851	0.966	0.922
Conflict	0.822	0.958	0.907

VI. CONCLUSION

Interpersonal skills naturally can be complicated and require a lot of work. For today's youth to be better, with effective communication skills in interpersonal, they need to learn how to start, maintain and perform these skills. Youth need to study essential techniques such as self-disclosing, perceiving others, effective listening, meaningful conversation, controlling self-emotion and managing conflict. Effective interpersonal skills should be applied in the contexts of action, interaction and transaction.

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