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## **PREDICTABILITY OF POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT**

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### **Abstract**

Designers have long adopted the knowledge from the field of psychology to expand architectural space's emotional impacts. Appropriate design strategies can improve and sustain well-being through instilling the sense of empowerment, leading to positive relationships among space occupants. *Issue:* A large body of the literature has sought to provide a conclusive empirical assessment on the predictability of attitudes and behaviours in positive relationships (PR) through personal empowerment (PE). *Purpose:* This paper intends to determine the predictability of PR based on PE. *Approach:* Multiple Correlation and Multiple Linear Regression were conducted to estimate linear associations and parameters of linear equations to predict PR components based on PE items. *Findings:* Components of PR were predictable by the majority of the PE items and 'monitoring behaviours to suit with situation' was the strongest predictor of PR.

**Keywords:** positive relationship, personal empowerment

## INTRODUCTION

Human interdependence with other humans (HIH) is one of the agents of subjective sustainable well-being (SSWB). HIH is the extent of individuals' abilities to dedicate themselves in their social context in return for SSWB. Personal empowerment (PE) and positive relationships (PR) are dimensions of HIH. Spatial designs support developmental milestones contributing to enhance PE. Some studies have theoretically justified the widely diverse ends and means of PE. While there are claims of PE as enablers of PR, empirical evidence is still lacking. This paper assesses the statistical predictability of PR based on PE.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Case studies based on articles from selected Asian Journals from the year 2011 onwards highlight conditional factors and potential determinants of Positive Relations (PR). Table 1 summarises these findings.

**Table 1** Conditional factors and potential determinants for positive relationships

Conditional Factors (keywords)	Potential Determinants	References
Parenting styles and involvement, authorities parenting, work-family balance; economic situation health and safety at home; community involvement; spirituality; density and number of bedrooms.	Involvement, support, resilience, time (ability to spend time with family), and family functioning (fulfilling roles and)	Noraini, Gandhi, Ishak, & Wok (2014)
husband and wife relations, family relationships, achievements, economic situations, standard of living, health, safety, relationship with community, spiritual practices, and basic amenities.	Functioning, involvement, resilience, tolerance (acceptance) and understanding, helpfulness and time with family	Abu Rahim, Ishak, Mohd Shafie, & Shafiai (2013)
Settlement areas (urban area), income (> RM 800), marital status (married) and possess social life skills	Care (feeling concern for), responsibility, and social contact (communication)	Mohamad et al. (2013)
Resilience (strength to cope in stressful situations), financial autonomy (financially independent)	Emotional intimacy, tolerance, responsibility	Shuib et al. (2013)
Gender – women apologize more to the same gender, while men apologize easier to the opposite gender. Women have a 'lower threshold of what constitutes offensive behaviour'. Men tend to apologize when they believe that they have actually offended someone.	Ability to apologise, humility (humbleness), modesty (moderate and unassuming), compassion (empathy and sensitivity)	Turiman, Leong, & Hassan (2013)
Age and number of children negatively correlate with marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction refers to the perception towards marital relationship in terms of the marriage as a whole, the husband or wife as a spouse, the overall relationship with husband or wife, and the expression of love in the relationship.	Love (deep affection), passion (enthusiasm for someone), intimacy (close familiarity), commitment (sense of obligation), and communication (connecting)	Hoesni, Subhi, Alavi, & Wan Azreena (2013)
Parents' self-esteem (confidence in abilities), family functioning (involvement and communication), and temperament (innate and enduring personality traits)	Conducive (encouraging) and responsive (readily responding) behaviours	Chiah & Baharudin (2013)
Parents' personality factors, parent-child relationship and practices, parental intervention, family sibship size, peer relationship and academic performance	Extraversion (outgoing) emotional stability, and conscientiousness (being careful or vigilant)	Ha & Tam (2013)
Psychosocial well-being (connection between psychological experience and wider social	Problem-solving skills helpfulness, intimacy, tolerance and openness in communication	(Demir et al., 2012)

experience), and social skills (skills facilitating interaction and communication with others)		
Peer-rejection (exclusion from social interaction), isolation (separation from others), criticism (expression of disapproval), strictness (rigidity and stringency), competitions (act of rivalry and supremacy), and emotional dissatisfaction (intense feelings of discontent or feeling disgruntled).	Interaction skills, flexibility (willingness to compromise) cooperativeness (joint action) and nurturance (love, care and attention given to someone)	Vellymalay (2013)

The findings from the case studies generate three significant components of PR: (i) Tolerance and Compassion (PRa), (ii) Sense of Inclusion (PRb) and (iii) Self-Regulation and Benevolent (PRc).

**Table 2** Components and determinants of positive relationships

Definition of PR	Components	Items	Code
Positive sense of intimacy, emotional responsiveness and continuous support expressed in personal relationships	Tolerance and Compassion	being flexible to differences in opinions	PRa
		confident (not shy) in expressing care and affection	
	Sense of Inclusion	aware and eager to know others' updates	
offering emotional support whenever it is needed		PRb	
Self-Regulation and Benevolent	engaging productively in decision making process		
	ensuring others are engaged in decision making process		
	forgiving of others' weaknesses and mistakes		
		self-conscious of own mistakes and quickly apologies	PRc
		motivating and assisting others to fulfil their life goals	
		expressing appreciations to others regularly	

Personal Empowerment (PE) manifests in the opportunity to exercise control, voice and choice with regards to social surroundings. Qualities adhere to PE include (i) self-motivation with regards to goal orientation, autonomy and self-regulation (Fatimah et al., 2011; Chin et al., 2012; Kok, 2016), (ii) social acceptance and coherence with others (Fatimah, Lukman, Khairudin, Wan Shahrazad, & Halim, 2011; Nesbit, Jepsen, Demirian, & Ho, 2012; Kadir, Omar, Desa, & Yusoooff, 2013; Zamani, Khairudin, Sulaiman, Halim, & Nasir, 2013), and (iii) composure, stability and resilience (Song, Cai, Brown, & Grimm, 2011; Sulaiman et al., 2013; Sipon, Nasrah, Nazli, Abdullah, & Othman, 2014).

**Table 3** Determinants of personal empowerment

Definition of PE	Items	Code
Self-esteem in taking control over life along with sense of composure to progress in the social environment	setting goals and striving to meet goals	PE1
	striving and working hard even for easy goals	PE2
	monitoring behaviours to suit with situations	PE3
	knowing when somebody is offended	PE4
	ensuring others are comfortable when making deals	PE5
	able to be friendly with distasteful persons when necessary	PE6
	able to work out solutions during stress and difficulties	PE7
	tackling problems efficiently in unexpected conditions	PE8
	feeling energetic for daily routines and activities	PE9
	having hardly distracted and focus mind	PE10

Based on theoretical underpinnings, this research hypothesises that PR components are predictable by PE. The following sections provide empirical evidence the predictability of PRa, PRb and PRc based on PE items.

**METHOD**

A sample of 4,315 was gathered after the data screening process. The Malaysian respondents were given an 11-point Likert scale to respond to questionnaire items which include the components of PR and the ten (10) PE items. Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to observe if there were linear associations between the PR components and PE items. Ensuing correlation analyses, multiple linear regression analyses were conducted to estimate parameters of the linear equations used to predict values of PRa, PRb and PRc from PE items.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

At 95% confidence level, there were statistically significant positive correlations between (i) PRa and each of PE items, (ii) PRb and each of PE items, and (iii) PRc and each of PE items. The null hypotheses claiming there are no statistically significant correlations between (i) PRa and respective PE items, (ii) PRb and respective PE items, and (iii) PRc and respective PE items were all rejected.

**Table 4** Multiple Correlations between PE items and PRa, PRb and PRc

Correlation Strength Threshold (Dancey & Reidy, 2004)											
r	0	.1	.2	.3	.4	.5	.6	.7	.8	.9	1
strength	zero	weak			moderate			strong		perfect	
<b>H<sub>0</sub></b> There is no statistically significant correlation between PRa and respective PE items											
<b>H<sub>0</sub></b> There is no statistically significant correlation between PRb and respective PE items											
<b>H<sub>0</sub></b> There is no statistically significant correlation between PRc and respective PE items											
DV	Stats	PE1	PE2	PE3	PE4	PE5	PE6	PE7	PE8	PE9	PE10
PRa	r	.494**	.511**	.498**	.470**	.470**	.431**	.442**	.427**	.445**	.405**
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	4315	4315	4315	4315	4315	4315	4315	4315	4315	4315
PRb	r	.446**	.465**	.461**	.426**	.451**	.382**	.402**	.403**	.419**	.375**
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	4315	4315	4315	4315	4315	4315	4315	4315	4315	4315
PRc	r	.458**	.473**	.480**	.433**	.463**	.386**	.412**	.389**	.420**	.351**
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	4315	4315	4315	4315	4315	4315	4315	4315	4315	4315
Statistical Interpretation of Multiple Correlation Analyses											
PRa	At 95% confidence level, there were statistically significant and moderate correlations between PRa and (i) PE1 (r =.494, p = .000); (ii) PE2 (r =.511, p = .000); (iii) PE3 (r =.498, p = .000); (iv) PE4 (r =.470, p = .000); (v) PE5 (r =.470, p = .000); (vi) PE6 (r =.431, p = .000); (vii) PE7 (r =.442, p = .000); (viii) PE8 (r =.427, p = .000); (ix) PE9 (r =.445, p = .000); (x) PE10 (r =.405, p = .000).										
PRb	At 95% confidence level, there were statistically significant and moderate correlations between PRb and (i) PE1 (r =.446, p = .000); (ii) PE2 (r =.465, p = .000); (iii) PE3 (r =.461, p = .000); (iv) PE4 (r =.426, p = .000); (v) PE5 (r =.451, p = .000); (vi) PE7 (r =.402, p = .000); (vii) PE8 (r =.403, p = .000); (viii) PE9 (r =.419, p = .000); (ix) PE10 (r =.375, p = .000).										

.000); (viii) PE9 (r =.419, p = .000). Additionally, there were statistically significant and weak correlations between PRb and (ix) PE6 (r =.382, p = .000); (x) PE10 (r =.375, p = .000).  
 At 95% confidence level, there were statistically significant and moderate correlations between PRc and (i) PE1 (r =.458, p = .000); (ii) PE2 (r =.473, p = .000); (iii) PE3 (r =.480, p = .000); (iv) PE4 (r =.433, p = .000); (v) PE5 (r =.463, p = .000); (vi) PE7 (r =.412, p = .000); (vii) PE8 (r =.389, p = .000); (viii) PE9 (r =.420, p = .000); Additionally, there were statistically significant and weak correlations between PRc and (ix) PE6 (r =.386, p = .000); (x) PE10 (r =.351, p = .000).

Three (3) multiple regression analyses were carried out to predict the values of each of dependent variables (i) PRa, (ii) PRb and (iii) PRc given the set of PE explanatory variables (PE1, PE2, PE3, PE4, PE5, PE6, PE7, PE8, PE9, and PE10).

**Table 5** Multiple Linear Regression – PE predicting PRa

H <sub>0</sub>							
There will be no significant prediction of PRa by PE1, PE2, PE3, PE4, PE5, PE6, PE7, PE8, PE9 and PE10							
Model Summary							
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson		
1	.583	.340	.339	1.21530	1.645		
ANOVA							
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.		
Regression	3277.434	10	327.743	221.905	.000		
Residual	6356.799	4304	1.477				
Total	9634.232	4314					
Coefficients							
Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	β			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	2.993	.116		25.824	.000	2.766	3.220
PE1	.104	.018	.124	5.661	.000	.068	.140
PE2	.113	.021	.127	5.383	.000	.072	.155
PE3	.107	.019	.119	5.736	.000	.070	.143
PE4	.086	.020	.091	4.401	.000	.048	.125
PE5	.047	.019	.053	2.457	.014	.010	.085
PE6	.086	.018	.091	4.745	.000	.050	.121
PE7	.025	.021	.028	1.216	.224	-.015	.065
PE8	-.035	.022	-.041	-1.617	.106	-.078	.008
PE9	.062	.021	.072	2.935	.003	.021	.104
PE10	.040	.017	.050	2.387	.017	.007	.074

A multiple regression was generated to predict PRa based on PE items. R value of .583 indicated an acceptable level of prediction (R > 0.5). The Durbin-Watson statistic was 1.645 which is between 1.5 and 2.5 and therefore the data was not autocorrelated. A significant regression equation was found, F (10, 4304)

= 221.905,  $p = .000$ , with an  $R^2$  of .340; indicating that the proportion of variance in PRa that can be explained by PE items was 34%.

At 95% confidence level, PE1 ( $B = .104$ ,  $t = 5.661$ ,  $p = .000$ ), PE2 ( $B = .113$ ,  $t = 5.383$ ,  $p = .000$ ), PE3 ( $B = .107$ ,  $t = 5.736$ ,  $p = .000$ ), PE4 ( $B = .086$ ,  $t = 4.401$ ,  $p = .000$ ), PE5 ( $B = .047$ ,  $t = 2.457$ ,  $p = .014$ ), PE6 ( $B = .086$ ,  $t = 4.745$ ,  $p = .000$ ), PE9 ( $B = .062$ ,  $t = 2.935$ ,  $p = .003$ ) and PE10 ( $B = .040$ ,  $t = 2.387$ ,  $p = .017$ ) were significant predictors of PRa. On the contrary, it was found that PE7 ( $B = .025$ ,  $t = 1.216$ ,  $p = .224$ ) and PE8 ( $B = -.035$ ,  $t = -1.617$ ,  $p = .106$ ) were not significant predictors of PRa.

Personal Empowerment (PE) items significantly account for 34% of Tolerance and Compassion (PRa). Eight (8) of PE items were significant predictors of PRa.

**Table 6** Multiple Linear Regression – PE predicting PRb

$H_0$							
There will be no significant prediction of PRb by PE1, PE2, PE3, PE4, PE5, PE6, PE7, PE8, PE9 and PE10							
Model Summary							
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson		
1	.536	.287	.286	1.31404	1.759		
ANOVA							
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.		
Regression	2998.190	10	299.819	173.637	.000		
Residual	7431.725	4304	1.727				
Total	10429.915	4314					
Coefficients							
Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std Error	$\beta$			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	3.226	.125		25.747	.000	2.981	3.472
PE1	.081	.020	.092	4.062	.000	.042	.120
PE2	.099	.023	.107	4.335	.000	.054	.143
PE3	.108	.020	.116	5.362	.000	.068	.147
PE4	.051	.021	.052	2.406	.016	.009	.093
PE5	.117	.021	.126	5.637	.000	.076	.158
PE6	.037	.020	.038	1.912	<b>.056</b>	-.001	.076
PE7	-.006	.022	-.006	-.254	<b>.799</b>	-.049	.038
PE8	.010	.024	.011	.412	<b>.680</b>	-.037	.056
PE9	.070	.023	.078	3.042	.002	.025	.115
PE10	.035	.018	.042	1.895	<b>.058</b>	-.001	.071

A multiple regression was generated to predict PRb based on PE items. R value of .536 indicated an acceptable level of prediction ( $R > 0.5$ ). The Durbin-Watson statistic was 1.759 which is between 1.5 and 2.5 and therefore the data was not autocorrelated. A significant regression equation was found,  $F(10, 4304)$

= 173.637,  $p = .000$ , with an  $R^2$  of .287; indicating that the proportion of variance in PRb that can be explained by PE items was 28.7%.

At 95% confidence level, PE1 ( $B = .081$ ,  $t = 4.062$ ,  $p = .000$ ), PE2 ( $B = .099$ ,  $t = 4.335$ ,  $p = .000$ ), PE3 ( $B = .108$ ,  $t = 5.362$ ,  $p = .000$ ), PE4 ( $B = .051$ ,  $t = 2.406$ ,  $p = .000$ ), PE5 ( $B = .117$ ,  $t = 3.042$ ,  $p = .002$ ), and PE9 ( $B = .070$ ,  $t = 2.935$ ,  $p = .003$ ) were significant predictors of PRb. On the contrary, it was found that PE6 ( $B = .037$ ,  $t = 1.912$ ,  $p = .056$ ), PE7 ( $B = -.066$ ,  $t = -.254$ ,  $p = .799$ ), PE8 ( $B = .010$ ,  $t = .412$ ,  $p = .680$ ) and PE10 ( $B = .035$ ,  $t = 1.895$ ,  $p = .058$ ) were not significant predictors of PRb.

Personal Empowerment (PE) items significantly account for 28.7% of Sense of Inclusion (PRb). Six (6) of PE items were significant predictors of PRb.

**Table 7** Multiple Linear Regression – PE predicting PRc

H <sub>0</sub>							
There will be no significant prediction of PRc by PE1, PE2, PE3, PE4, PE5, PE6, PE7, PE8, PE9 and PE10							
Model Summary							
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson		
1	.549	.301	.299	1.28381	1.674		
ANOVA							
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.		
Regression	3055.230	10	305.523	185.372	.000		
Residual	7093.701	4304	1.648				
Total	10148.931	4314					
Coefficients							
Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std Error	$\beta$			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	3.361	.122		27.452	.000	3.121	3.601
PE1	.094	.019	.108	4.814	.000	.056	.132
PE2	.086	.022	.094	3.845	.000	.042	.129
PE3	.132	.020	.144	6.726	.000	.094	.170
PE4	.049	.021	.050	2.366	.018	.008	.090
PE5	.117	.020	.127	5.757	.000	.077	.157
PE6	.038	.019	.039	1.982	.048	.000	.075
PE7	.045	.022	.050	2.066	.039	.002	.088
PE8	-.047	.023	-.053	-2.043	.041	-.093	-.002
PE9	.107	.022	.121	4.767	.000	.063	.151
PE10	-.020	.018	-.024	-1.096	.273	-.055	.015

A multiple regression was generated to predict PRc based on PE items. R value of .549 indicated an acceptable level of prediction ( $R > 0.5$ ). The Durbin-Watson statistic was 1.674 which is between 1.5 and 2.5 and therefore the data was not autocorrelated. A significant regression equation was found,  $F(10, 4304)$

= 185.372, p = .000, with an R<sup>2</sup> of .301; indicating that the proportion of variance in PRc that can be explained by PE items was 30.1%.

At 95% confidence level, PE1 (B = .094, t = 4.814, p = .000), PE2 (B = .086, t = 3.845, p = .000), PE3 (B = .132, t = 6.726, p = .000), PE4 (B = .049, t = 2.366, p = .018), PE5 (B = .117, t = 5.757, p = .000), PE6 (B = .038, t = 1.982, p = .048), PE7 (B = .045 t = 2.066, p = .039), PE8 (-.047, t = -2.043, p = .041) and PE9 (B = .107, t = 4.767, p = .000) were significant predictors of PRc. It was found that PE10 (B = -.020, t = -1.096, p = .273) was not significant predictor of PRc.

Personal Empowerment (PE) items significantly account for 30.1% of Self-Regulation and Benevolent (PRc). Nine (9) of PE items were significant predictors of PRc.

**Table 8 Summary of findings**

		IV (Predictor Variables) - β									
		PE1	PE2	PE3	PE4	PE5	PE6	PE7	PE8	PE9	PE10
DV (Outcome Variables)	PRa	.124 ✓	.127 ✓	.119 ✓	.091 ✓	.053 ✓	.091 ✓	.028 ✗	-.041 ✗	.072 ✓	.050 ✓
	PRb	.092 ✓	.107 ✓	.116 ✓	.052 ✓	.126 ✓	.038 ✗	-.006 ✗	.011 ✗	.078 ✓	.042 ✗
	PRc	.108 ✓	.094 ✓	.144 ✓	.050 ✓	.127 ✓	.039 ✓	.050 ✓	-.053 ✓	.121 ✓	-.024 ✗

✓ = statistically significant predictor; ✗ = not statistically significant predictor

DV	Indicators	IV	Top 3 Strongest Predictors	β
PRa Tolerance and Compassion	• being flexible to differences in opinions	PE2	striving and working hard even for easy goals	.127
	• confident (not shy) in expressing care and affection	PE1	setting goals and striving to meet goals	.124
	• aware and eager to know others' updates	PE3	<b>monitoring behaviours to suit with situations</b>	<b>.119</b>
PRb Sense of Inclusion	• offering emotional support whenever it is needed	PE5	ensuring others are comfortable when making deals	.126
	• engaging productively in decision making process	PE3	<b>monitoring behaviours to suit with situations</b>	<b>.116</b>
	• ensuring others are engaged in decision making process	PE2	striving and working hard even for easy goals	.107
PRc Self- Regulation and Benevolent	• forgiving of others' weaknesses and mistakes	PE3	<b>monitoring behaviours to suit with situations</b>	<b>.144</b>
	• self-conscious of own mistakes and quickly apologies	PE5	ensuring others are comfortable when making deals	.127
	• motivating and assisting others to fulfil their life goals	PE9	feeling energetic for daily routines and activities	.121
	• expressing appreciations to others regularly			

The empirical assessments indicate that the majority of PE items significantly account for PRa, PRb and PRc. PE3 which denoted 'monitoring behaviours to suit with situations' was in the top three strongest predictors for all components of PR. Thus implying that the ability to 'fit in' in the social sphere highly encourage and enable more positive behaviours in relational well-being. Manoeuvring emotions and behaviours mindfully and rationally demands the commitment to continually watch over personal thoughts and feelings as well as



reactions of others. Architectural design can enhance attentive communications and receptive interactions through space sizes and layouts, furniture organisations, colour choices and many other design strategies. Designers indirectly enrich positive relationships through empowering space occupants, therefore leading to positive relationships and sustained well-being.

## CONCLUSION

HIH in SSWB deems well-being that is achievable through a supportive and congruent interaction system. This paper proves that positive relationships are achievable through personal empowerment. The future direction of this research involves statistical modelling on the constructs described in this paper.

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