Emotional Intelligence: A Comparative Analysis of Two College Business Administration Programs

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A comparative study of two universities explores the emotional intelligence (EI) of students in two College of Business Administration (CBA) programs with contrasting missions, visions, and populations. This study investigates the extent to which EI test scores and sub-scales varied among two CBA student populations. Despite the differences between the two universities, no differences were evident in the EI abilities among the two CBA student populations. Further research will explore the extent to which universities can impact EI short and long-term through classroom interventions.

The American College Personnel Association called for a response to the compelling evidence regarding the relevance of emotional intelligence (EI) in academic and workforce settings advocating the creation of a learning models incorporating emotional intelligence competencies, through engagement in practical research efforts to promote active learning through integrated learning communities (Low, Lomax, Jackson & Nelson, 2004).

The transition to college is characterized by a period of social, emotional, and academic adjustment (Chickering, 1969), important indicators of academic and career success (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Robbins, Oh, Le, & Button, 2009). Empirical evidence indicates that emotional control impacts academic outcomes early in the learning process diverting critical attention away from task learning leading to worry, rumination, and upset (Kanfer, Ackerman & Heggestad, 1996).

Salovey and Mayer's (1990) study of social (non-cognitive) intelligence presented a framework for emotional intelligence (EI), which was based on the ability to regulate one's emotion and accurately monitoring others' emotions. According to Salovey and Mayer (1990) emotional intelligence is "a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (1990:185).

Goleman (1995) examined the relationship between traditional cognitive IQ tests and success in the workplace, finding that IQ by itself was not a good predictor of job performance. Goleman found that emotional intelligence is a more important determinant of management success than technical expertise or cognitive ability. Cherniss and Adler (2000) found that EI was critical for effective work performance. A national survey found four in ten workers were not able to work cooperatively with fellow-employees and only 19% of entry-level applicants have sufficient self-discipline in work habits (Harris Education Research Council, 1991). Recognition exists among researchers and practitioners that emotions play a large role in organizational life. For example, emotional intelligence is a key area to help accountants perform better (Akers & Porter, 2003). Additionally, Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) found that partners in a large public accounting firm with strong self-management and social skills achieved a 390% percent incremental annual profit.

Several studies indicate a positive correlation between EI and academic success among college students. Lam and Kirby (2002) found that EI accounts for increases in individual cognitive-based performance above the level attributed to general intelligence in three of the four emotional intelligence subscales; overall EI, perceiving emotions, and regulating emotions. Burgess-Wilkerson, Benson, and Frankforter (2012) conducted an analysis of EI in an academic setting and found that EI scores can improve as a result of classroom interventions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional intelligence is a construct that has to do with the awareness and expression of emotions experienced by oneself and others, as well as the ability to understand and regulate such emotions. Thorndike (1937) first reported the concept of "social intelligence." Wechsler (1940) fought for the addition of "non-intellective aspects" as a measure of general intelligence. Likewise, Leeper (1948) purported that "emotional thought" should be considered when reviewing the concept of "logical thought." However, it was not until the 1980s that the current concepts related to emotional intelligence started to emerge.

Gardner (1983) shared a theory of multiple intelligences that encouraged researchers to step outside the notion that human beings are confined to a singular or plural view of intelligence. Gardner also explained that there were other areas of human intelligence that were traditionally ignored or overlooked by academic institutions. Gardner (1983) explained that there are two types of intelligence that have held the focus and emphasis of traditional academic thought in institutions of higher education: language intelligence and logical-mathematical intelligence. Nevertheless, Gardner purported that there were five more intelligences that were equally important to collective human intelligence: musical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, and intrapersonal intelligence. Out of the research on social intelligence emerged the concept of personal intelligence (Gardner,1983), which consists of two constructs: interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. Interpersonal intelligence is purported to focus on external events and involves the recognition and evaluation of feelings in others. Intrapersonal intelligence, on the other hand, focuses on the self and one's ability to recognize and evaluate his or her own feelings.

Within these multiple levels of intelligences, a movement evolved that expanded two particular areas of Gardner's approach (i.e., interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences). Salovey and Mayer (1990) coined the term "emotional quotient" and later defined it as "a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use that information to guide one's thinking and actions (1993)." Both intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence are theorized to be a large portion of what Mayer et al. (2000a) define as emotional intelligence.

According to Bar-On (2002), several researchers expanded Gardner's interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences into six primary components of emotional intelligence: emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, empathy, interpersonal relationship, stress tolerance, and impulse control. Several definitions of EI emerged through the advanced study of the six components. Bar-On (2005) explained that the multiplicity of definitions that came out of Gardner's approach has added layers of confusion and complexity as to the best approach, definition, and measure of emotional and social intelligence. Since that point of advancement and divergence, from Gardner's view of the construct, some researchers, (Goleman, 1998; Mayer & Salovey, 1997), named this construct "Emotional Intelligence" while in 1997 Bar-On chose the term "emotional and social intelligence" and formalized the concept of Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI) in 2005. For the purpose of this study, the authors ask you to accept all of these labels and definitions under the term emotional quotient (EI).

The American College Personnel Association asked institutions of higher learning to position themselves to advocate and promote the development of EI in all aspects of academic life (Low, Lomax, Jackson & Nelson, 2004). Much interest in EI exists and its impact in both academic and professional settings. Research indicates a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and cognitive-based performance among college students. Lam and Kirby (2002) ascertained the level to which emotional intelligence accounts for increases in individual cognitive-based performance in an academic setting. They found a positive correlation existed in three of the four emotional intelligence subscales: overall EI, perceiving emotions, and regulating emotions.

In a study of MBA students, Boyatzis, Stubbs, and Taylor (2002) concluded that MBA programs should put forth a concerted effort to integrate emotional intelligence training into the curriculum using approaches that include self-assessment and self-development. These programs in return would result in positive employment outcomes.

EI is known to impact career outcomes. A survey of employers conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers found that employers rated interpersonal skills as the most desired skill of recent graduates (Shivpuri & Kim, 2004). In a study of accounting students, Bay and McKeage (2006) found that average accounting students did not have high levels of emotional intelligence, and given the critical role of emotional intelligence in career success, those students were ill-prepared for their futures. They argue that emotional intelligence has relevance for accountants in the areas of decision-making and also suggests that emotional intelligence is a variable that may explain the gap between ethical understanding and ethical behavior in the workplace. While graduates of business programs may be technically prepared for their disciplines, they are not necessarily prepared for the emotional aspects of their work.

Measures of Emotional Intelligence

Many theorists have operationalized their theories of emotional intelligence with evaluative measures for use with populations (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Bar-On, 2002; Goleman, 1995). Each construct of EI can be distinguished according to the definition of emotional intelligence and the measurement approach employed (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000a). Mayer, et al. explained that "there are two general models of emotional intelligence: a mental ability model and a mixed model that includes various personality dispositions" (p. 416). Two of the three models of emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 2002; Goleman 1995) are categorized by Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2000b) as mixed models or trait models, while the other (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) is considered a mental ability model. The assessment of emotional intelligence is continuing to expand in both definition and research. Currently, more self-assessment, trait emotional intelligence instruments exist than ability measures of EI, and considerable controversy exists regarding which measure is most reliable and valid (Antonakis, 2003; Judge, Colbert, & Ilies, 2004; and Salovey, Mayer, Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2003).

Various business schools are embracing emotional intelligence as part of a program requirement either as part of an integrated curriculum or as a program activity. In one instance, emotional intelligence theory was infused into a school's business communication curriculum as a strategy for developing interpersonal and intrapersonal communications more effectively (Myers & Tucker, 2005). Vandervoort (2006) advocated improving student emotional intelligence because those with higher self-knowledge tend to make better career choices, have less behavioral/emotional problems, and have higher scores on standardized achievement tests. Some colleges view EI as a vital part of academic life, particularly in the Colleges of Business Administration (CBA).

A small 2004 study by Ellen Paek empirically examined the extent to which religiosity, operationalized as religious orientation and religious behavior is related to emotional intelligence. The study examined the extent to which religious orientation and behavior were related to self-reported (EI) in 148 church attending adult Christians. The study found that the individuals' self-reported religious orientation was positively correlated with their perceiving themselves to have greater EI. Significant positive correlations were also found between level of religious commitment and perceived EI.

In their 2002 article entitled "Linking emotional intelligence, spirituality and workplace performance: Definitions, models and ideas for research," Tischler, Biberman and McKeage reviewed literature on both EI and various aspect of spirituality. They found that both EI and spirituality appear to lead to similar attitudes, behaviors and skills.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Comparative studies of two universities are of interest when exploring emotional intelligence particularly as it relates to divergent CBA programs with contrasting missions and visions as well as the population of attendees. The purpose of this study is to investigate the extent to which emotional intelligence test scores will vary among undergraduate and graduate CBA students from two divergent universities and to determine the extent to which scores on certain EI sub-scales will vary among undergraduate and graduate CBA students of the two universities. The three 'C's' of Jesuit education. i.e.,

'Competence, Conscience and Compassion,' are infused in multiple touch points of Rockport's curriculum. With Rockport's emphasis on compassion and community service, both of which foster emotional intelligence, we predict that CBA undergraduate students at Rockport will score higher than CBA undergraduate students at Whitmore overall in EI. We predict that CBA graduate students at Rockport will score higher overall than CBA graduate students at Whitmore. We predict that CBA graduate students at Rockport and Whitmore will score higher than undergraduate students at Rockport and Whitmore. We predict that CBA undergraduate students at Rockport will score higher in empathy and social skills than CBA undergraduates at Whitmore; we predict that graduate CBA students at Rockport will score higher in empathy and social skills than graduates at Whitmore. Accordingly, we offer the following hypotheses:

H1: EI test scores among undergraduate students at Rockport will be higher than EI test scores among undergraduate students at Whitmore.

H2: EI test scores among graduate students at Rockport will be higher than EI test scores among graduate students at Whitmore.

H3: EI scores among undergraduate students at Rockport will be higher in interpersonal skills (empathy and social skills) than undergraduate students at Whitmore.

H4: EI scores among graduate level students at Rockport will be higher in interpersonal skills (empathy and social skills) than graduate students at Whitmore.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Participants

The population consists of students at two divergent universities in both undergraduate and graduate level CBA - AACSB accredited programs in the U.S.

Rockport University - Founded by a Jesuit priest, Rockport University is one of 196 Jesuit colleges and universities that exist throughout the world - 28 of those in the United States. The university serves approximately 3,000 students at its campus offering 50 undergraduate and graduate programs. Rockport has a 12:1 student to faculty ratio, has an average size of 24 for undergraduate lecture classes, and all classes are taught by faculty; 92% of the full-time faculty hold the highest degree in their field.

The Jesuits' shared goal is to provide an excellent education that develops competent, compassionate, and committed leaders through a value-centered education. Together, Jesuits and professors embrace the contributions of other religious and ethical traditions because they complement the Catholic intellectual tradition of social thought and service. The Jesuit tradition building individual dignity is infused throughout the curriculum, which is based on the seven classical modes of inquiry: artistic, historical, literary, philosophical, theological, scientific relational and scientific causal. Graduates from Rockport University receive two transcripts: one for academics and another for community service.

Rockport's College of Business School is comprised of approximately 300 undergraduate students and 350 graduate students. Rockport is accredited by The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the gold standard in business education. Fewer than 5% of the world's business schools have achieved this distinction.

Whitmore University, a public, coeducational, liberal arts university located in the Southeastern part of the United States, has been an educational leader for more than a century. The school was founded by a superintendent of schools initially as a teacher's training school for women. Over time, Whitmore became one of the premier women's colleges in the region and expanded its mission to become a comprehensive institution offering degrees in a growing variety of disciplines. The institution diversified its class ranks by extending its educational offerings to minorities in 1964 and becoming fully coeducational 1974.

The university was also recognized by a national foundation as a university that "encourages character development." The values of service, excellence, diversity, community, and leadership have shaped

Whitmore's successes and supported its development. Like Rockport, its baccalaureate in business administration and master of business administration degree programs are accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB-International). Less than one-third of U.S. business school programs and less than 5% of programs worldwide hold this accreditation. A total of 42 undergraduate and 26 graduate degree programs are available to over 6,000 students in the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Business Administration, the College of Education, and the College of Visual and Performing Arts. A liberal arts core provides the foundation for all degree programs. Whitmore has a 14:1 student to faculty ratio, has an average size of 24 for undergraduate lecture classes, and all classes are taught by faculty.

TTI Emotional Quotient (TTI)

The assessment used for this research was the TTI Emotional Quotient report, a self-report personality based approach that allows students to understand their own EQ in order to avoid making high-risk decisions without understanding how their emotions are influencing their choice. The TTI Emotional Quotient is a multidimensional perspective of emotional intelligence. The emotional intelligence item bank builds upon the Goleman (1995) model of emotional intelligence. Since its inception the test has been administered to individuals in several countries globally. Several analyses were conducted using a sample of working professionals ages 20-75: the mean age was 48; 44% were male and 52% female, and the professionals lived in the U.S. England, Greece, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. The demographic composition includes 77% Caucasian, 16.9% Black/African American, 1% Hispanic/Latino, and 2.8% from two or more races (EQ Mentor, 2008, pg. 4).

The TTI assessment provides an overall Emotional Intelligence Quotient (EQ) score, an Intrapersonal Intelligence score, an Interpersonal Intelligence score, scores on five components of EQ, and five personality factors as described below in Table 2. The TTI has 57 questions and requires approximately 10 minutes for completion of the online self-assessment. It has two components and five subcomponents. The questions use a five-point Likert scale. The first component, interpersonal, includes self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation. The second component, intrapersonal, includes social skills and empathy. The five subcomponents combine to form a total score. Table 2 displays the components, subcomponents, and definitions for the TTI.

Respondents rate each item using a Likert scale with the options: "very inaccurate, somewhat accurate, neither accurate nor inaccurate, somewhat accurate, and very accurate." There are 31 reverse scored items on the instrument. The TTI Emotional Quotient is normed based upon the standard bell curve resulting in 16% low scores, 68% average scores, and 16% high scores (EQ Mentor, 2008, pg. 2).

Table 1: Components, Subcomponents & Definitions – TTI Emotional Quotient

Components	Subcomponents	Definition
Total Score		A general indication of a respondent's level of emotional intelligence. Includes all five subcomponents.
Intrapersonal		The ability to understand yourself, form an accurate concept of yourself, and apply that concept to operate effectively.
	Self-Awareness	The ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions, and drives, as well as their effect on others.
	Self-Regulation	The ability to control or re-direct disruptive impulses and moods and the propensity to suspend judgment and think before acting.
	Motivation	A passion to work for reasons that go beyond money and status and a propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence.
Interpersonal		The ability to identify and understand how to effectively relate to, work with, and motivate others. This is made up to two key competencies:
	Social Skills	A proficiency in managing relationships and building networks.
	Empathy	The ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people.

Table 2: Reliability of the Instrum

Component	#Items	Test-Retest	Alpha
Self-Awareness	10 items	.880	.738
Self-Regulation	12 items	.789	.792
Motivation	12 items	.916	.767
Empathy	12 items	.903	.764
Social Skills	11 items	.952	.817

Component	#Items	Test-Retest	Alpha
Total EQ	57 items	.967	.926
Intrapersonal EQ	34 items	.948	.885
Intrapersonal EQ	23 items	.901	.868

Data Collection

A total of 100 Rockport CBA students were invited to complete the TTI inventory. The invitation was distributed to students in any major within the CBA program. Out of the 127 who were invited to participate, 100 did so. This gives a response rate of 78%. The response rate for this study is favorable, and 100 inventories were used for the analysis. Likewise, a total of 100 Whitmore students were also invited to participate in the study as part of a course activity. Of the 100 invited to participate 100 agreed. IRB protocol was followed for students at both institutions, and each student signed informed consent documents.

Method

We calculated means for each EI score for the students from each university. Data analysis was conducted using a two-sample t-test assuming equal variances. We used one-tailed tests because our hypotheses predicted direction.

Results

Table 3 displays the comparison of mean EI scores for all students from both schools. While our hypotheses did not address such a comparison, we believed that this disclosure was important. While Rockport students scored higher than Whitmore students, no statistically significant differences were present. The greatest difference we found was that Rockport students scored higher than Whitmore students on the Social Awareness component (P < .08) which is still not very significant.

Table 3: Comparison of Mean EI Scores for All Students from Both Schools

Variable	Mean - Rockport	Mean - Whitmore	Difference	t-Statistic	P-Value
Social Awareness	7.72	7.48	0.24	1.41	0.08
Self-Regulation	6.23	6.27	-0.04	-0.22	0.41
Motivation	7.74	7.69	0.05	0.26	0.40
Empathy	7.40	7.38	0.02	0.15	0.44
Social Skills	7.40	7.27	0.13	0.71	0.24
Intrapersonal EQ	7.26	7.14	0.12	0.89	0.19
Interpersonal EQ	7.41	7.33	0.08	0.51	0.31
Total EQ	7.32	7.21	0.11	0.86	0.20
n	100	100			
df	198				

Table 4 displays the comparison of mean EI scores for undergraduate students from both schools. H1 and H3 addressed the differences for total and interpersonal EI, predicting that undergraduate Rockport students would have higher scores for total and interpersonal EI than Whitmore students. Neither H1 nor H3 were statistically significant, with difference scores of just 0.20 (P < .11) and 0.18 (P < .18).

Table 4: Comparison of Mean EI Scores for Undergraduate Students from Both Schools

Variable	Mean - Rockport	Mean - Whitmore	Difference	t-Statistic	P-Value
Social Awareness	7.68	7.44	0.24	1.08	0.14
Self-Regulation	6.14	6.01	0.13	0.49	0.31
Motivation	7.59	7.44	0.15	0.73	0.23
Empathy	7.34	7.21	0.13	0.57	0.29
Social Skills	7.41	7.17	0.24	0.96	0.17
Intrapersonal EQ	7.15	6.95	0.20	1.14	0.13
Interpersonal EQ	7.38	7.20	0.18	0.91	0.18
Total EQ	7.24	7.04	0.20	1.22	0.11
N	64	61			
Df	123				

Table 5 displays the comparison of mean EI scores for graduate students from both schools. H2 and H4 addressed the differences for total and interpersonal EI, predicting that graduate Rockport students would have higher scores for total and interpersonal EI than Whitmore students. Neither H2 nor H4 were statistically significant, with difference scores of just -0.02 ($P < .45$) and -0.08 ($P < .39$) and the direction for the differences was not correctly predicted.

Table 5: Comparison of Mean EI Scores for Graduate Students from Both Schools

Variable	Mean - Rockport	Mean - Whitmore	Difference	t-Statistic	P-Value
Social Awareness	7.80	7.55	0.25	0.93	0.18
Self-Regulation	6.39	6.69	-0.30	-0.87	0.19
Motivation	7.99	8.09	-0.10	-0.46	0.32
Empathy	7.52	7.63	-0.11	-0.42	0.34
Social Skills	7.39	7.41	-0.02	-0.06	0.48
Intrapersonal EQ	7.46	7.44	0.02	0.07	0.47
Interpersonal EQ	7.45	7.53	-0.08	-0.28	0.39
Total EQ	7.45	7.47	-0.02	-0.12	0.45
n	36	39			
df	73				

Our overall results suggest that, in spite of the differences between the universities, the EI abilities of the student populations were remarkably similar.

Conclusions

Despite the many differences between Rockport and Whitmore universities (see Appendix A), those differences had no apparent effect on the EI abilities of the undergraduate and graduate students of those schools. This provides evidence that the EI abilities of students may be very similar despite apparent differences in their universities. While we found a surprising homogenous population of students, our findings support earlier work of Bar-on, Salovey, Mayer and others who have found that age cohorts typically have similar EI scores. The fact that students at both universities are for the most part traditional (ages 18-24) seems to have more of a bearing on the results than does the divergent vision, mission, location or culture of the population at both universities. While some EI studies have shown that culture does impact EI test results, our findings indicate that the culture although quite different, was less impactful than age when taking EI tests. Further research interests are the extent to which universities can impact overall EI through on-going classroom interventions and the extent to which EI continues to improve long-term as a result of the classroom interventions.

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Appendix A: University Dashboards: Rockport University & Whitmore University (Ay 2011-2012)

Entering Freshman Class	Rockport University	Whitmore University
Sector	Private not-for profit; coed	Public; coed
Carnegie Classification	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)
Campus setting	Urban; Large city: Midwest	East
Religious Affiliation	Roman Catholic	NA
UG & Graduate Degrees	50	67
Class Size	24	24
On Campus housing	Yes	Yes
BUS School Accreditation	AACSB	AACSB
FTEs	2291	6170
UG FTE	1740	5029
GR FTE	551	1141
% Male	39%	33%
% Female	61%	57%
FTE Faculty	132	286
Student-Faculty Ratio	12 :1	14:1
UG Tuition	$27,700	$13,026 In State $24,276 Out of State
Room & Board	$8060	$7258
% 1st time students receiving grants	99% Average $21,000	96% Average $9,018
Average age	18-24	18-24