

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE COMPARISON OF HOSPITALITY AND COB UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

by

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## Abstract

Emotional Intelligence, at its most basic definition, is a generic competence in perceiving emotions (both in oneself and in others). This helps us to regulate our emotions and cope effectively with emotion riddled situations in the everyday academic and professional environment. The combination of integrating our awareness of emotions and our intellectual knowledge provides the human mind with a more total picture of its surrounding environment.

Once there is a basic understanding of Emotional Intelligence and how it affects people, it is inferred that a person can enhance his or her emotional intelligence to increase chances of success within their education, their job, and their life. Companies are beginning to use this information to tailor leadership and management courses and identify potential future leaders within their organization. This study looks to identify if this is potentially true by looking at a segment of management and business focused undergraduate students.

The purpose of this project is to better understand how College of Business undergraduate student academic performance is related to their level of emotional intelligence. It is also the goal of the study to examine the differences in emotional intelligence that may exist between disciplines within the College of Business. The results of this research can be used in the adaptation of how professors teach College of Business students, in an effort to better prepare them for a professional career in business or management. The comparison of emotional

intelligence may also allow students to better choose a specific field of study within the College of Business or tailor their study habits to encourage their academic success.

Questions to be addressed:

- Does a student's emotional intelligence show a significant correlation with academic success?
- Is there a significant difference between areas of study within the College of Business?
- How can this research be used or expanded in the future?

Data was collected via a 40 question survey. The initial findings indicate that there is a correlation between a student's self-reported GPA range and their surveyed emotional intelligence score, but when comparing all three factors of GPA, major, and emotional intelligence there is not a statistical difference.

## Literature Review

### *Developing Children's Emotional Intelligence*

This piece focuses on the importance of emotional intelligence in growing minds and how it affects a student's academic success. It also looks into how to incorporate lesson plans to foster emotional intelligence growth in the students. This book may be focused on younger children, but I believe that the general understanding of emotional intelligence and how it

could aid the progression of a student's education is a valuable thought that all educators should take into account. Incorporating emotional intelligence into the lesson plans will allow professors to focus on certain skills needed to function in a managerial role such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills. These skills have been taught to us since elementary school, but can be honed in a direction to foster success in a management position through specific teachings and exercises

### *Putting Emotional Intelligence to Work: Successful Leadership is more than IQ*

Ryback addresses the idea that the entire landscape of leadership and corporations is changing drastically. In order to accommodate this shift in company goals, the leadership roles are changing as well. Managers are having to focus more on feelings and the fostering of employees to encourage healthy workplaces. Managers aren't just smart, they need to be able to accommodate all types of employees and grow their company as a whole. Emotional intelligence bridges that gap between knowledge and people management skills to create the ultimate leader.

### *Coaching for Emotional Intelligence: The Secret to Developing the Star Potential in your Employees*

Wall discusses the five components of Emotional Intelligence: self awareness and self control, empathy, social expertise, personal influence, and mastery of purpose and vision. These five key components encompass everything a manager needs in addition to knowledge. It has been

found that success in one's professional life is only 1/3 technical skills and training and the other 2/3 is attributed to their application of emotional intelligence skills. Military groups showed that the higher EI that a team leader had, the more success the team experienced in an 81 group study. No matter the field that anyone enters, it has been determined that a high IQ alone with not constitute success, but paired with a high mastery of emotional intelligence a star is born.

### *What We Know About Emotional Intelligence*

Zeidner, Roberts, and Matthews broke down every aspect of emotional intelligence in what we know to be true today, how we test for it, and how the study of this topic is evolving. When studying the increase in violence and disarray in the youth of our country over the past twenty years, it was determined that our students are receiving an adequate education, but lacking in the emotional intelligence skills needed to function as a prosperous citizen. The increase in bullying, fights, and other issues in our schools is a clear example of students lacking these skills. In a world where Corporate Social Responsibility is only gaining more traction, emotional intelligence is more prevalent than ever. The modern workplace creates environments that foster teamwork and striving towards one goal and one mission. Employees who fail to develop, grow, and prosper in such environments will be left to the wayside as no amount of training will "give" an employee a higher understanding of emotions. Classic management theories coincide with the idea that increased emotional intelligence creates a manager who will guide and grow his or her team, not destroy it with the need for success. There are new theories

being created every day as to how emotional intelligence can be better used in our schools, in the workplace, and just in our world in general.

## Methods

Research was collected using an anonymous, approved survey that analyzed the Emotional Intelligence of the participating students, consisting of thirty three questions. Questions could be answered on a scale of one to five, with five meaning to strongly agree to the statement and one meaning to strongly disagree with the statement. This study also included questions regarding the gender, ethnic origin, current educational classification, major, area of concentration within the major program, and GPA range of the student while remaining anonymous. This demographic focused section consisted of seven additional questions, totaling the survey at forty questions. This voluntary survey was handed out in multiple Hospitality Management and general College of Business classes to ensure a variety of participant, spanning across all ages, genders, and concentrations. These classes included intro level hospitality management classes to many upper level accounting, business, and hospitality classes. This survey was also administered online using the web-based system Qualtrics across two classroom pools. A total of 469 undergraduate student's surveys were completed and used for data analysis.

## Results

A total of 469 usable SSEIT instruments were used for this study. Initial analysis of the data provided the following demographic make-up of the participants:

Demographic characteristics of the young adult college student participants.

Trait	Number	Percent
<hr/>		
Gender		
Female	278	59.3
Male	191	40.7
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Ethnicity		
African American	46	9.8
Asian / Pacific Islander	17	3.6
Caucasian	370	
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Hispanic / Latino 16 78.9

Other 20 3.4

4.3

#### Educational Classification

Freshman 41

Sophomore 130

8.7

Junior 159

27.7

Senior 139

33.9

29.6

#### Major

Business 187

Hospitality Leadership 188

Other 93 40.0

Missing 1 40.2

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19.8

N = 469

0.2

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The majority of students who participated in this study were female (59.3%) and Caucasian (78.9%). The second largest ethnic group participants were African American (9.8%). Both Business Administration (40%) and Hospitality Leadership (40.2%) majors were represented equally.

Coefficient alphas for each of the construct areas of emotional intelligence were analyzed. It was found that each construct area had a minimum acceptable alpha coefficient level of 0.70: (1) perception of emotion: .732; (2) Managing Own Emotions: .815; (3) Managing Others Emotions: .783; and (4) Utilization of Emotion: .737.

Based on the results of this preliminary study it was found that a multivariate statistical difference existed between majors about various constructs of emotional intelligence. About the emotional intelligence construct of perception of emotion differences existed between business administration and hospitality leadership majors, as well as other majors and hospitality leadership students. About the construct of managing own emotions hospitality leadership students differed from both business administration majors and others. About the

construct of managing others emotions hospitality leadership students differed from both business administration and others. About the final construct of Utilization of emotion hospitality leadership students differed from business administration students. It was also found that there is a significant difference between students self-reported GPA and their emotional intelligence levels. However, when the interaction of GPA and major were examined with regard to emotional intelligence levels no significant multivariate difference occurred.

## Discussion

The survey looked to determine a correlation between a student's self-reported GPA, educational major, and emotional intelligence scores. It was hypothesized that GPA would have a direct positive correlation when compared to emotional intelligence, and hospitality management majors would show a higher emotional intelligence score as well. What these findings show is that there is a direct correlation between higher GPAs and the student's emotional intelligence score, as well as a difference between majors in emotional intelligence scores, but when combined there is not a statistical significance.

There are a few identifiable limitations with this specific study. By using only undergraduate students, we are limiting our focus to individuals that may not have fully developed brains and emotional intelligence skills sets. Also by using a self-reported GPA range, the students may not be truthful in their responses. By giving this survey in a group and public setting, such as a classroom, many environmental factors such as noise and other students may have affected a

student's response. Future research would be required looking at graduate students as well as professionals holding management and non-management positions across multiple types of business operations. This would fully complete the set of data to determine if Emotional Intelligence can predict academic success and future professional success. Some of the factors to look further into would be a focus on differences between gender, ethnic origin, and educational classification to determine any other potential statistical differences with this survey.

## Conclusion

Business operations from around the world emphasize the development of relationships. Successful relationships between internal and external customers can be a key competitive advantage that can result in great economic gains for all involved. Various business operations also attribute success to emotional intelligence levels. Having an understanding of emotional intelligence concepts could be useful tools to all business operations looking at gaining that competitive advantage. This study attempted to examine a connection between emotional intelligence and academic success. Based on the results of this study the following conclusions were drawn:

1. There is a difference in the emotional intelligence of students based on academic major

2. There is a significant difference in the emotional intelligence among students based on their academic success using self- reported GPA as a measure
3. There is not a significant difference among business administration majors and hospitality leadership majors when examining emotional intelligence levels and academic success using self-reported GPA as a measure of academic success.

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