

IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONGST 1ST GENERATION UNIVERSITY MARKETING STUDENTS AND THOSE WITH COLLEGE EXPERIENCE IN THEIR FAMILY

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence (EI) is defined as the “ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional meanings, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote both better emotion and thought” (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 22). EI is of interest to marketing educators and educators in general because it involves the ability to generate accurate reasoning about emotions and the ability to use emotions and emotion knowledge to enhance thought (Mayer, Roberts, & Barsade, 2008).

A variety of studies have investigated the impact on student performance. Some have found a relationship between EI and performance. For example, Zeidner et al. (2005) reported that EI was higher for gifted compared to non-gifted seventh through 10th grade Israeli students. On the other hand, Parker et al. (2003) found that aggregated EI scores poor predictors of academic success (e.g., only predicting 8-10% of variability in first-year GPA).

Emotional intelligence may also have an even greater effect on the performance of groups that are vulnerable to stereotypes of lower academic performance versus those that are not (Spencer et al., 1999). One such group is the first generation student. These are defined as students who are from a family in which neither the father nor the mother have a college education. Those students who have college experience in the family are referred to in this study as “other students.” Research has already started to identify factors involved with and educational approaches that can increase the confidence of first generation

university students in their ability to control their educational progress (James et al., 2006). This study looks into EI as one of these factors impacting on first generation students and contrasts it with its affect on other students.

Students were divided into two groups for this exploratory study to determine the differential effects of emotional intelligence on 1st generation students versus those whose parents have experience with a college education. There were 63 students in the 1st generation group and 71 students in the group with parental experience in college hereafter referred to as “others.”

These results suggest that components of emotional intelligence, specifically self control of emotions can help students to do better in class over time. At first, on the first exam, overall GPA is the only one of the factors measured that is directly related to class performance. This certainly makes sense since the GPA is undoubtedly a proxy for study skills, experience and other factors that give some students an advantage over others. Over time, better self control over emotions seems to be related to performance. Perhaps those students that are better able to control their emotions and get down to work are also able to perform better on exams and other class work. These results suggest that by helping students to systematize their studying habits and time management, especially in those classrooms where there are large numbers of first generation students, marketing instructors are enabling them to overcome emotional management differences to achieve their potential.

References Available on Request