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Emotional Intelligence
And Employability
Of Undergraduate
Students At Kampala
International University,
Uganda

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the effect of emotional intelligence on employability skills of students. Using non-probability sample of 265 students enrolled in business management degree program at Kampala International University. A quantitative survey research paradigm was employed. Multiple regression analyses revealed a significant relationships between the participants emotional Intelligence and Employability skills ($R^2=0.48$, $p<0.05$). The results further showed that handling emotions ($Beta=0.321$, $p<0.05$) and motivations ($Beta=0.204$, $p<0.05$) are key aspects of emotional intelligence that influence employability skills. The conclusion was drawn that emotional intelligence does influence employability skills and the recommendation was made on the need to enhance technological competence would further improve employability skills. It also emphasised the need to improve emotional intelligence in order to increase the prospect of employability.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Employability, Undergraduate Students, Uganda

1. INTRODUCTION

As the Fourth Industrial Revolution ushers a series of social, political, cultural, and economic upheavals that will unfold over the 21st century, it is vital that students are better equipped and empowered to navigate the evolving workplaces (Teng, Ma, Pahlevansharif, & Turner, 2019). Potgieter & Coetzee (2013) pointed out the fact that employability of employees and graduates has become important in a technology-driven knowledge economy. Faced with the contemporary challenges students are faced with decreased job security, fast-paced technology and increasing personal responsibility for continuous need to upgrade their skills, employability and lifelong learning as a means to remain relevant in the contemporary job market (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2011). Unlike work-related or technical skills, employability skills are general in nature and cut across all industry types, business sizes, and job levels. According to Singh & Singh (2008), employability skills are not job exact, but are skills which horizontally cut across all industry sectors and vertically across all job levels; from gateman to chief executive officer. Employability skills are essential for attainment, maintenance, and excelling on a job (Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013).

Ashkanasy & Daus (2005) argued that Emotional intelligence develops over a person's life span and can be enhanced through training, and through teaching and learning in formal educational contexts (Jaeger 2003). Emotional intelligence is generally regarded as a factor with the potential to contribute to more positive attitudes, behaviours and outcomes (Carmeli 2003) and has been related to career success (Goleman 1998). Researchers and career counsellors also increasingly recognise the significance of emotional intelligence in career success, career satisfaction and well-being (Kidd 2008; Sinclair 2009). This increased interest has led to the curiosity as to whether emotional intelligence has a role to play in employability skills among students.