The effect of highly emotionally intelligent teachers on their students’ satisfaction

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to answer the basic research question “Do highly emotional intelligent teachers increase student’s satisfaction in the universities?”

Design/methodology/approach – The paper is a quantitative study using self-reporting questionnaires applied on 283 students and 10 faculty members.

Findings – The paper shows the importance of having high emotional intelligent teachers in the universities to increase students’ emotional intelligence (EI) and, therefore, their satisfaction. The results show that the primary factor that will increase the EI of students is not what most of the scholars mentioned, the EI of teacher, but the class interactions.

Practical implications – The paper makes a recommendation to universities to hire emotionally intelligent teachers who stress on increasing the EI of students. Universities, by increasing the EI of their students, will improve their business situation, since if students are happy they will remain in the universities, spending, therefore, more money and encouraging other students to do so.

Originality/value – No such research was previously conducted in Lebanon where still few people understand the meaning or the importance of EI. This study, therefore, is fulfilling a gap, a brick in the wall of knowledge on class interaction in bridging the link between teachers and students.

Keywords Education, Emotional intelligence, Customer satisfaction, Students, Teachers

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

As the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) aces managerial discussions (Goleman, 1995) and catches fire in the corporate world, the educational institutions that play the role of backyard kitchens for future executives should seek to play their role in the constant evolution process. This research paper focusses on the importance of EI as a factor affecting the human, managerial and educational fields and highlights the necessity of having high emotional intelligent teachers in the universities to be able to increase students’ customer satisfaction (SCS).

Could the level of education be increased by employing high EI teachers which might lead to higher emotionally intelligent students and thus better graduates and high customer satisfaction (Woodruff, 1997)? Universities seeking this path need to focus on this aspect of their operational functions as their mere financial inflows rely on this satisfied customer called student. To do so, involving the service provider, the teacher becomes focal. The question remains whether the level of EI of the teachers, with their classroom interactivity, personality, actions, emotional involvement, and classroom environment creation, can lead to generating the desired customer satisfaction at the student level through stimulating their EI?

The significance of the study is to identify a new tool that can positively enhance the human side of future executives, the survival and the improvement of the universities’ image. Investigating these relationships links between EI of teachers and improving the
behaviour of students in class as the challenge that the researchers are attempting to dwell into.

The following sections include a review of the pertinent literature, methods and results, academic and managerial implications and conclusions.

2. Literature review
EI attempts to study why a person succeeds and another fails in life, regardless of their cognitive abilities, and how some with less skills and abilities perform and succeed more than some of the better equipped (Bradberry and Greaves, 2009). As the missing link is neither intelligence nor education or knowledge, researchers are looking into other dimensions. Psychologists are looking into determining and measuring behaviour and personality traits, while others are suggesting EI as the answer.

2.1 Emotional intelligence
EI is concerned with the way people understand, manage and express their own emotions as well as other people’s felt emotions (Cherniss, 2004). It includes rationalising and bringing intelligence and cognition into emotional feelings (Goleman, 1995). It focusses on being aware of one’s personal and other people’s emotions, and on learning to manage one’s own behaviour or emotional quotient, in a way to enhance different relationships in the external environment or close circle of life, such as at home, work, and community where one normally dwells (Weis et al., 2009).

The historical origins of EI go back to Binet’s (1894) conceptualization of “total intelligence” (Kaufman and Kaufman, 2001). His work on the role of emotions in a person’s totality and intelligence highlights that we cannot separate one’s emotions and cognitive abilities. Earlier, Thorndike (1920) defined social ability as a type of intelligence, setting it away from the different mechanical and abstract intelligence forms. Since then, a sizeable volume of research effort is funnelled resulting in a multitude of definitions focussing on its importance as a human concept (Hedlund and Sternberg, 2000). The term “emotional intelligence” appeared first in Peter Salovey and Jack Mayer’s model defining EI as a cognitive ability that allows humans to rationalise and solve problems (Mayer et al., 1999).

This model encompasses four types of hierarchical abilities, namely, the emotional perception (identification of emotion), the emotional integration (the use of emotion in facilitating thinking), the understanding of emotions (ability to understand and interpret and communicate emotional information) and the management of emotions (the ability to control oneself, understand one’s feelings better and be open to growth).

Salovey and Mayer’s (1990) model is criticised as having no added value, where EI is neither different from any other type of intelligence nor from personality, and adds no validity beyond the cognitive ability (Landy, 2005; Locke, 2005). The popularity, however, of EI goes to Daniel Goleman’s (1995) book Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ, in which he suggests a new performance-based model that includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. He argues that most of the difference (80 per cent) in the success of people is not explained by IQ tests, but rather by the elements that constitute EI. A standing limitation for Goleman is his attempt to measure almost all factors but IQ (Verbeke et al., 2004).

In a parallel effort, Bar-On (1997), Psychologist, defines EI as “an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one’s ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and determines one’s psychological wellbeing” (p. 14). His model includes five broad areas of skills, namely, the intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, stress management, adaptability and general mood. Both Goleman’s (1995) and Bar-On’s (1997) models are known as the mixed models as they combine mental abilities to personality and character skills. These two models have generated opposing views. The ability model presents
a restrictive view of EI relying on the ability of the person to understand and distinguish emotional signals and information (Mayer et al., 2000), while the mixed model presents EI in a broader frame including all what relates to success that the IQ test cannot measure (Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1995, 1998). Another major approach to EI is the trait approach by Petrides, referred to as an emotion-related disposition and self-knowledge method (Petrides et al., 2007). The model discusses self-perceptions and behavioural dispositions as affecting one’s ability to “recognise, process and utilise emotional information” (Petrides et al., 2004, p. 278). It suggests that people tend to behave and or react in a certain way at certain emotional situations, focusing on self-perception and self-efficacy.

2.2 Why do we need to study EI?
Emotionally intelligent people do better in life than others (Bar-On, 1997). They have better abilities in controlling their feelings, communicating, understanding themselves and others, and adapting to any changing situation (Bar-On and Parker, 2000). High EI is important because it improves the physical and psychological health of people, so their academic and work performances are enhanced (Bar-On and Parker, 2000). One way to prove the importance of EI is through proving that high EI people have a higher tendency to better perform in an assortment of aspects of life than those with lower EI (Bar-On, 1997); and have a high capability to assimilate and express their personal selves, to associate well with others, and to handle successfully the multiple demands of daily life (Bar-On et al., 2007). To become better EI persons, they need to learn these skills. This will only work out if they are adequately motivated, sufficiently optimistic and relatively positive. It is proven that educating people to become emotionally intelligent is possible through teaching and training. EI education starts at home followed by school and university, then the workplace. The role that parents play is very important for increasing their children’s EI, by understanding and listening to them, and helping them build social bonds (Bar-On et al., 2007). In universities, high EI teachers resolve a number of the above-mentioned problems and help foster high EI students (students’ emotional intelligence (SEI)). The success of the university teachers in this endeavour allows for, and equips these young students with the tool they need to succeed in their future careers (Parker et al., 2004). It is important that these teachers increase the EI of students. The higher the EI of students, the more they will be able to engage in positive attitude toward study, the more they will control their emotions, which will help them prevent negative actions and decrease the feeling of anxiety and stress they face in universities (Wilbraham et al., 2018). Students with high EI have better educational achievement and become more engaged (Wilbraham et al., 2018). In the work field, empowering employees with EI proved to be a key success factor through its effect on their improved job performance, horizontal and vertical cooperation, and developed sense of teamwork. Workers with high EI deal better with arising issues and perform more effectively (Wolff et al., 2006). This is what employers are seeking from fresh graduates and newly recruited employees, since their EI and interpersonal communication skills add value to the corporate environment (Landau and Meirovich, 2011). Therefore, it is vital to improve the SEI or future employees, as once they have high EI, they will be able to think and lead differently, and create an engaging work environment. Thus, by teaching EI we can develop leaders that think differently, lead differently and are more positive (Joyner and Mann, 2011). Hence, the role of university teachers is important in developing the EI of the students.

2.3 Measuring EI
To uncover the importance of EI in the managerial context, scientific tools and measures are developed by several scholars. Since there are many models, many tests are used to measure EI, focusing on the mental life of the respondents.
First, the ability model, developed by the Mayer, Salovey and Caruso and known as the Mayer, Salovey and Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test, measures four variables or tasks that represent the four areas of EI, namely, perceiving, understanding, managing and regulating emotions (Daus and Ashkanasy, 2005). Second, the Emotional Competency Inventory put forth in 1999 (Boyatzis, 2001; Boyatzis and Goleman, 2001) measures emotional competency, based on Boyatzis and Goleman’s self-assessment questionnaire, and is composed of 18 competencies using 72 scale items put into the four groups (self-management, social awareness, self-awareness and relationship management) (Boyatzis and Sala, 2004). Third, Bar-On’s Model, using the self-report Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) instrument, measures the ability to be aware of, understand, control and express emotions. Fourth, the Trait EI model uses the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) to measure personality-based EI (Petrides and Furnham, 2003). Fifth is the Emotional Intelligent Scale, an easy-to-use and short tool consisting of 33 items (Schutte et al., 1998). Sixth, the Work Group Emotional Intelligence Profile for measuring EI of groups focusing on the ability to deal with one’s own emotions and others’ emotions. Finally, the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) self-report test, based on Davies et al.’s (1998) four-dimensional definition of EI, composed of 16 scale items using a five-point Likert scale (Li et al., 2012). The test proved to be reliable (Li et al., 2012), valid and internally consistent (McCleskey, 2014).

### 2.4 Measuring EI in Education

The importance of EI in education is that it can predict academic success much more than other traditional measurements of intelligence tools (Goleman, 1995), leading to student achievement and retention (Abdullah et al., 2004). The objective of universities is to hire teachers with high EI, who have empathy toward the students, understand them, and know how to interest them, motivate and engage them continuously in class. This will result in fewer absences and less dysfunctional behavior among students, who become more engaged in class interactions and discussions. They, therefore, will be more interested, focus more in class, and surf less on the internet during class time (Moore and Mamiseishvili, 2012). In order to be more consistent in their study, researchers selected teachers who are giving similar instruction types of courses in order not let the nature of the course affect the relationship between the teacher and student, but to stress on the way the course is given. Therefore, the researchers selected teachers who teach theoretical and not numerical courses such as management, marketing and economics. The reason is that in these similarly designed courses, the teachers use similar skills. Therefore, they will be able to compare the teaching of high emotionally intelligent teachers to the ones with low EI.

The high EI teachers act differently than the low emotionally intelligent while teaching these courses in different universities. The teacher with high EI will encourage active participation in class will have more empathy toward the students, motivate them more and create a positive class climate and mostly encourage group activities in his class (Nizielski et al., 2012).

### 2.5 What is customer satisfaction and what increases the satisfaction of students?

For companies to survive, they should be customer oriented and concentrate on how to maximise customer satisfaction (Al Hakim and Maamari, 2017). It requires high EI to deal with demanding customers and to retain them in any kind of business (Singh and Singhal, 2015). Customer satisfaction can be conceptualised as a contemplative or emotional response to a judgmental process (Singh and Singhal, 2015). A satisfied customer is loyal and less price sensitive, which increases the profitability of the company (Helgesen, 2006). Therefore, one of the most important goals of the universities is how to satisfy their students and retain them (Grace, 2004). Satisfied students have a positive word of mouth and contribute to enhancing the image of the university. As a result, the university will make more profit and...
have a better reputation. Studies have shown that there are three factors that cause student satisfaction: the faculty, the advisory staff and classes (Hameed and Amjad, 2011). It is, however, the class experience, the teacher–student relationship, that affects students’ satisfaction (Grace, 2004).

The students, as customers, mostly require a good class climate where interaction and a good quality of teaching occur (Douglas et al., 2006). Having high emotionally intelligent teachers will lead to that, since they know how to interact, motivate and deliver a win-win relationship for others and themselves, by spreading positive feelings all around them (Kunnanatt, 2004). If teachers succeed in doing that, it will lead to an increase in their students’ satisfaction. An emotionally intelligent individual is more optimistic, manage in a more lucrative way his emotions and is able to develop a stronger relationship with others, leading to better customer satisfaction (Singh and Singhal, 2015). However, the question remains whether we can consider universities as service companies and students as customers?

One of the most central stakeholders of any university are students (Fernandez et al., 2010). Universities today are managed as a business entity, similar to the service industries, with the goal of satisfying customers, for maintaining them and increasing revenues (Hameed and Amjad, 2011). There is a consensus in our days to consider students as primary customers of education services (Banwet and Datta, 2003). Desai et al. (2001) argue that “Teaching in a higher educational setting is analogous to service delivery in the business sector. Students, as consumers of professional output, have needs and wants which if better understood should result in an improved educational experience” (p. 136). Many researchers disagree saying that “The model (students as customers) is corrupt and corrupting” (Snyder, 2007, p. 3) and that faculty should refuse to treat students as customers. The reason for this rejection is that faculty know what is better for their pupils, and when these students are called or treated as customers, it changes the dynamics and the perceptions’ relationship between the faculty and the students, thereby negatively affecting the educational process (Snyder, 2007). Moreover, Clayson and Haley (2005) postulate that treating students as customers is harmful and that they rather be treated as partners of the shared educational experience. Furthermore, some researchers consider them as customers and as products (Obermiller et al., 2005). But when the student is viewed as a product of the university, the educational institution is oriented toward the satisfaction of its society and its expectations rather than the student (Vaduva et al., 2011). Whereas when the focus is on students as customers, the faculty and their teaching effectiveness become relevant (Muncy, 2008). Thus, the relationship relating the role of students with that of the university is complex in nature.

EI has been subject to many critics. Scholars criticised the fact that there are many definitions and models of EI, and whether it is a kind of intelligence or not. Landy and Locke claimed that EI does not add anything to other intelligence. Other scholars claimed that EI remains controversial with respect to its validity and its utility and might not lead to various forms of success (Miners et al., 2018). Waterhouse (2006) argues that EI creates confusion since there are many conflicting constructs of EI, and that it has not been differentiated from personality factors and IQ factors, and therefore adds little to understanding human behaviour. Landau and Meirovich (2011) argued that EI does not affect the performance and GPA of students, while Murphy (2006) found that the relationship between EI and student satisfaction is non-significant.

Moreover, some researchers declare that incorporating materials on EI into a curriculum in the university will only improve the knowledge of EI and not the actual students’ EI, and that EI is not related to GPA (Landau and Meirovich, 2011). What the universities should try to do is not only to integrate an EI course into their curricula, but also to train their teachers to become highly emotionally intelligent.
The literature gap that this research is attempting to unfold is two dimensional. First, that no previous research has studied such a model, attempting to establish a link between EI of teachers, EI of students, and whether this will lead to customer satisfaction. Furthermore, no similar study in this particular field was conducted in the Lebanese context. Second, that the major Lebanese universities are not realizing the importance of having high EI teachers and their role in improving the performance of their students, and therefore their academic level, and in enhancing the image of the university in this increasingly competitive environment, where the number of universities has increased from less than 10 to 53 in 20 years. Therefore, the topic is very important for both universities and faculty members, since teachers are playing an important role in students’ achievement and learning (Vesely et al., 2013).

In this paper, we will try to prove the importance of EI especially in university education.

3. Methodology

Based on the above literature review, higher EI of teachers might lead to higher EI of students (Woodruff, 1997). In this study, we test the postulated and not yet tested relationship between the EI of teachers and their respective students’ satisfaction, to see whether it is mediated by the SEI. A quantitative study is deployed for this social research, employing empirical statements and methods (Cohen and Manion, 1980) and deductive reasoning (Hair et al., 2007). The courses selected in this sample are those that teach theory such as management, marketing and economics and not courses of numerical application. The similarity between courses helps the researcher in comparing the performance of low EI teachers to the ones with high EI. Using numerical data and mathematical-based methods (Creswell, 1994), and following a positivist approach, the following research question (Figure 1) is tested. The researchers are resorting to a positivist approach, as they believe that EI is a skill that people can learn and acquire, adapt and change their behaviour accordingly. Moreover, the researchers are looking for correlations or relationships between variables, all of which take them away from interpretivism and closer to positivism:

**RQ1.** Do high EI teachers increase students’ satisfaction in the universities?

Based on the above-reviewed literature, the postulated hypotheses to test are the following:

**H0.** Teacher’s emotional intelligence (TEI) will not increase the SCS.

EI can be built up with time. From home to school, the person acquires the skill by observation and example (Bar-On et al., 2007). Students sharpen this life-needed skill at the university with high EI teachers that foster high EI students (SEI), equip these young students with the tools needed for future careers (Parker et al., 2004). The higher the SEI, the more they are engaged (Moore and Mamiseishvili, 2012) and positive (Nizielski et al., 2012; Kunnanatt, 2004), control their emotional positions, and manage their anxiety, stress and fears (Wilbraham et al., 2018). Therefore, our first hypothesis is:

**H1.** TEI increases SEI. The higher the teacher’s EI, the higher the respective students’ EI.

High EI teachers can create a good class environment for learning and interaction, which is a key need for university students (Douglas et al., 2006). Such a class environment is
reported to lead to SCS (Hameed and Amjad, 2011). Therefore, if teachers can develop the EI of their students through engagement (Moore and Mamiseishvili, 2012) and interaction, this will definitely improve the student’s management of their emotions (Singh and Singhal, 2015), leading to a higher SCS. Thereby, our second and third hypotheses:

H2. SEI increases SCS.

H3. TEI affects SCS.

One of the major goals of universities is to attract and retain students. To retain them, these customers need to be satisfied with the service received. Studies show that class environment (Grace, 2004), faculty (Hameed and Amjad, 2011) and class interactions (Singh and Singhal, 2015) play a major role in SCS. Other studies report that EI is a skill that can be learned, and that faculty can affect their students in different aspects of this respect by boosting their EI (Wilbraham et al., 2018; Moore and Mamiseishvili, 2012; Nizielski et al., 2012; Kunnanatt, 2004). Thus, the literature provides indicators that TEI may affect SEI, which in turn leads to increased SCS. Thus, our fourth hypothesis is:

H4. SEI partially mediates the relation between TEI and SCS.

Our sample is selected from university teachers and their respective undergraduate students of the top-ranking four business schools in Lebanon using two questionnaires. These four universities are selected using the following criteria. First, they all use the English language as the instruction language. Second, they follow the liberal arts curricula. Third, they are all mature universities with more than 50 years of experience. Fourth, all four are internationally accredited. Finally, all their faculty members hold master’s and terminal degrees and have teaching as a career (and are, therefore, either academically qualified or practically qualified in their respective teaching fields).

The first questionnaire used is for teachers, capturing demographic variables (age, gender, education level, teaching and work experience) and measuring their EI using the WLEIS survey. The second tests demographics, EI (WLEIS) and customer satisfaction of students (SCS) (Tinnesz, 2001). After piloting the questionnaires on 4 teachers and 15 students, the data are collected. The result is the responses from 10 teachers and 304 students. After data entry and cancelling the incomplete responses, the final respondents were 10 teachers and their respective 283 students. The WLEIS and the SCS tools used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). The WLEIS is considered complete (Libbrecht et al., 2010), and its scores are related to satisfaction (Naseer et al., 2011).

4. Results

Data are collected during the Fall semester of the academic year 2015, through contacting and visiting universities that follow the American liberal educational system (credits). Only four universities took part in the study. The researchers were introduced by the teachers, introduced their research and collected the data on site. For a proper data entry, the researchers labelled the received questionnaires with the initials of the teacher; thus, they were able to relate the data of the students to their respective teachers in the various locations of data collection. SPSS 23.0 is used for data analysis, including reliability and validity of the scale. The KMO test results for all the parts of the scale used range between 0.705 and 0.809 (see Table I). The values of Cronbach’s α range between 0.684 and 0.892 and are considered acceptable. The Bartlett’s sphericity test value ranges between 0.04 < p < 0.000. The eigenvalues scale variation explained for SEI is 3.439 (cumulative 57.381 per cent) and 4.222 for teachers (cumulative = 3.976), SCS is 5.344 (cumulative = 77.681 per cent), all being acceptable at p < 0.05, allowing the researchers to reject the null hypothesis. Construct, content and criterion validity are
analysed through scale development process and data collection and entry steps, to conclude satisfactorily.

The data analysis is conducted using a number of statistical tools. These reveal a number of facts, beginning from the frequencies and cross-tabulations, to the correlations, and ending by linear regression analysis (Figure 2). First, the data analysis for frequencies reveals that the sample is composed of 283 students and 10 professors from four universities. These students are 236 Lebanese (83.4 per cent) and 47 non-Lebanese (16.6 per cent), the majority being from the age group 18–22 years old (85.5 per cent) (see Table II).

The gender distribution by university shows a slight male dominance. The students at hand have limited teaching or working experience. The majority (268 or 94.7 per cent) have 0–3 years of teaching experience and 93.3 per cent have 0–3 working experience, with the remaining few distributed with little statistical meaningfulness. Moreover, the teachers who took part in the study are five males and five females. Three of the teachers are from the age group 36–40 and seven are older, with five holding master’s degrees and five holding terminal degrees. Among the teachers, nine have more than ten years of university-level teaching experience, and one only with experience between seven and nine years. Finally, these teachers are also equipped with some corporate work experience, two having four to six years and eight having more than ten years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Scale items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s α</th>
<th>KMO</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SEI</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.774</td>
<td>0.741</td>
<td>1,268.550</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Customer satisfaction</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.684</td>
<td>0.705</td>
<td>933.343</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>TEI</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.892</td>
<td>0.809</td>
<td>987.359</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table I. Tool and data checks

$R^2=0.338$  $\text{Sig.}=0.114$

$R^2=0.927$  $\text{Sig.}=0.000$

$R^2=0.459$  $\text{Sig.}=0.000$

$R^2=0.834$  $\text{Sig.}=0.000$

Figure 2. Regression results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17–18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>19–20</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>39.21</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>54.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21–22</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>43.13</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>35.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>23–24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.80</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>25–30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>31–35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>36–40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>40+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II. Sample distribution

Totals 283 100 154 100% 129 100%
The statistical test of correlation is run using SPSS 23.0. The results show several relationships that need to be highlighted. First, gender is weakly negatively correlated with SEI with $r = -0.155$ at sig. = 0.009, $p < 0.05$, but is positively weakly correlated with SEI. Second, participating students’ education is positively weakly correlated with SCS ($r = 0.029$; sig. = 0.006). Third, students’ education is positively weakly correlated with SEI ($r = 0.019$; sig. = 0.074; $p < 0.05$). Fourth, the teachers’ teaching experience is positively moderately correlated with the students’ working experience ($r = 0.497$; sig. = 0.000; $p < 0.01$). Fifth, the teachers’ teaching experience is positively weakly correlated with the SCS ($r = 0.040$; sig. = 0.049; $p < 0.05$). Sixth, the teachers’ teaching experience is negatively weakly correlated with SEI ($r = -0.066$; sig. = 0.027; $p < 0.05$). Seventh, the teachers’ working experience is positively weakly correlated with the SCS ($r = 0.077$, sig. = 0.019; $p < 0.05$). Finally, the teachers’ working experience is negatively weakly correlated with the SEI.

To test the model and the hypotheses at hand, the researchers analysed the data for linear regressions (Table III). The results show the presence of a partial mediation and confirm $H1$, $H2$, $H3$ and $H4$. The relationship between teachers’ EI and students’ customer satisfaction is improved upon the insertion of the mediator variable “students’ EI”.

### 5. Discussion

These results highlight a general trend in the business education circles, where corporate entities are looking into what can improve the performance of managers and employees. The proof that EI has affected the analysed relationships is by itself a standing statement that understanding and managing the emotional state of the employees is adamant to its introduction to the corporate world as a manageable factor of high importance in human behaviour.

First, the fact that gender’s correlation is higher for female respondents who show higher EI and change in female behaviour is due to the increased EI in terms of understanding and managing own emotions, as well as understanding and managing others’ emotions. In a paternalistic environment, where females are trained to be precautious in expressing an opinion, the role of education and values of the teaching institutions that adopt, and actually apply these values, is high. These universities in which the study is unfolded embrace in their applied values and practices: equality, non-discriminatory environments, citizenship behaviour, altruism, civic engagement, etc.

Second, the class interactions of participants and their taking part in class discussions where the teacher has high EI have affected the SCS, raised awareness, respect, listening skills, and acceptance of the other, thus resulted in improved EI. Third, teacher–student classroom interaction improved SEI through sensitising the group members to the needs of their colleagues. This sensitivity, coupled with social skills applied for interaction in the group dynamics process, results in higher understanding and appreciation of the other, leading to a higher index of SEI. This allows these EI-trained students to play a better role in conflict resolution, as they actively seek understanding of the other and bridging the gaps among the group members. These students are considered equipped to be successful leaders in their respective environments. Fourth, there is no doubt that a more experienced teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEI $\times$ SEI</td>
<td>0.338</td>
<td>0.114</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>39.626</td>
<td>-3.250</td>
<td>0.516</td>
<td>-0.338</td>
<td>-6.295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEI $\times$ SCS</td>
<td>0.963</td>
<td>0.927</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>3,033.066</td>
<td>1.043</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>0.963</td>
<td>55.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEI $\times$ SCS</td>
<td>0.677</td>
<td>0.459</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>202.716</td>
<td>-6.222</td>
<td>0.437</td>
<td>-0.677</td>
<td>-14.238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEI $\times$ SEI $\times$ SCS</td>
<td>0.913</td>
<td>0.834</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>598.287</td>
<td>0.191</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>1.195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table III. Regression results*
conveys a better message, is received better, as well as applies a better teaching technique, thus resulting in a better effect on SEI and SCS. This creates an ambiance of harmony where all the components of interaction feel safe, are synchronized and have higher reception ability to the signals communicated by others. This general feeling of inclusion and participation by itself creates a feeling of satisfaction and organisational citizenship, fostering team spirit, leading to bonding and support, which have a direct impact on raising the SCS feeling. These felt feelings of inclusion play a role in developing balanced personalities of these global citizens (Moon, 2009).

Fifth, the teacher’s working experience improves SCS through conveying openness and two-way communication in class, in addition to reflecting the book’s message through non-book examples. These examples elevate students’ interest and value added, thus their SCS and commitment to the educational process. Sixth, the longer the teacher’s working experience, the larger the age and knowledge gaps between the teachers and students. This pushes the former to model an aspiring role, conveying to their young ears the tips they need for increasing their employability and understanding the real world.

Finally, the SEI development on their perception and feeling of SCS results from class interactions and activities. TEI increases SEI enough to increase SCS.

6. Research contributions

This study contributes to the academic and practitioner knowledge. Education is important in our days and has an important economic contribution to the labour markets. Lebanon is the educational hub for the Middle East. Lebanon has had a yearly growth in its university enrolment of 3 per cent of its population over the last two decades (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2015, interview with Dr Ahmad Jammal, General Director of Higher Education Department). Therefore, it could be concluded that TEI affects a large percentage of its population and largely affects its upper-education market. Therefore, this study will have an impact on many fields – academic, managerial and social. First, the model tested in novel by itself, and no previous study has dwelled on the Lebanese environment, where EI is emerging in the human side of management, educational management and marketing fields. Second, it highlights the importance of EI in the academic field, proving that creating a positive class environment conducive of motivation and communication boosts openness, understanding and other social skills through interaction, leading to essential educational and developmental benefits. The human communication factor is portrayed as a tool for educating future executives toward problem solving, conflict resolution and communication. When EI of students increases, the behaviour of students in class improves, they will be more motivated, participate more, surf less on the internet, show less misconduct behaviour which leads to better interaction with the teacher. All of this will improve the academic and social behaviour of the students which help the teacher in reaching their goals and the university in achieving its mission.

Third, managerially, we suggest to universities to hire teachers with high EI, train and develop faculty EI, as it improves SEI resulting in better education and bottom-line results, since if students are happy they will remain in their university. This commitment of the students to their respective universities helps in the students’ recruitment process through word-of-mouth, enhancing university reputation and image, ultimately leading to its success. Universities are subject to increasing competition. The best marketing tool that they can use is the positive word of mouth of their students, which creates a good positioning of the university in the mind of its customers, helps enhancing the image and rank of the university, which will lead to higher enrolment rates. We also recommend to universities to integrate within their faculty recruit and orientation processes, the analysis of applicants in EI, and since EI can be learned, to train on a continuous on-going basis their current teachers, on how to be more and more emotionally intelligent while dealing with their students.
Moreover, teachers are the managers and students are the customers, and the universities need to find ways to satisfy their customers, therefore the above-mentioned results prove the important role of EI, in enhancing the workplace communication, stress management, performance and cooperation, as also reported by Wolff et al. (2006).

Fourth, policy makers in the educational field may add a course or workshop on EI to the teachers’ preparation curricula, to equip these career-seeking persons in the teaching profession with this novel tool that is handy and essential in classroom management. As a result, both public and private educational systems would be ameliorated along time toward a better output, more satisfied students and much lower drop-out rates, thus better economic returns on investment.

Fifth, the social implications of the mediation of SEI relate to today’s social problems emanating from students withdrawing or dropping out of schools and universities, and falling victims to antisocial behaviour, poor mental health and involvement in aggressive acts of violence (Parker et al., 2004). EI is reported to improve the personal and mental health of people, equipping them to live as happier citizens, contributing positively to society, avoiding anxieties, depressions and stress through mature interactions and communication (Ogundokun and Adeyemo, 2010). EI reduces the misconduct behaviour of students and leads to a better quality of people who are more responsible and successful (Nizielski et al., 2012), thus preparing better future citizens. The importance of the study also lies in the fact that when improving the EI of students, the conduct of the students in a class will improve, their academic performance will progress as well as their behaviour, and they will become better leaders and citizens of the global and diversified world.

7. Limitations
The limitations of the study do not affect its integrity or reliability. The researchers are aware of the sample’s size of 283 students and their teachers, out of a total population consisting of approximately 190,000 students, representing only 1.5 per cent of the population. Second, the sampling or sample selection process relied heavily on personal contacts in receiving the permissions to conduct the study in these specific universities. Although the universities are sampled randomly, the researchers aimed at larger participation to improve the sample’s representativeness, especially that the universities whose branches are in rural areas were not approached for limitations in budget, weather and time.

8. Conclusion
The results of this confirmatory study on the role of teachers’ EI on the relationship between the students’ EI and their SCS are laid. The proof is that in the environment where the study is unfolded, the effect of this relationship is supported. Moreover, the role of TEI in enhancing SEI is established as well as the effect of TEI on the students’ feeling of customer satisfaction as university students using the services of these upper educational institutions. These results have many managerial implications. Managing staff and faculty in upper-level educational institutions needs to focus more on the importance of SCS as a factor to be used in recruitment planning. The changing effect of TEI on SEI is an eye-opener for those whose daily job involves dealing with students as customers, where the study proves the existence of this sentimental interchange of student–customer, and which becomes a tool that can be built upon in university branding, customer expectations, brand equity as well as employability investment. Moreover, the role that TEI plays in raising SEI is of essence in the recruitment of faculty members who first believe in the role of EI; second, who possess an acceptable level of EI; and third, who have an adequate tenure of teaching experience, and finally who can bring added value through their previous working experience. All these factors that compose a faculty’s curriculum vitae become essential tools that are vested in the...
creation of a classroom atmosphere incumbent toward allowing discussion dynamics and opportunities for learning and expression among students, leading to their feeling of value learning where their benefit from all the presented components of the class session including the teachers’ EI that nurtures the students’ emotional development and intelligence.

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Further reading


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