A CAUSAL-COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF CULTURAL IDENTITY AND

GENDER ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE LEVELS OF CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

STUDENTS

by

M. Teresa Dustman

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

To date, very little research has joined the topics of Christian college students' emotional intelligence (EI) levels, gender and cultural identity. This study was grounded in the Social Cognitive Theory which states that the environment, cognitive factors, and personal factors inform the learning process. The dependent variable was EI and the two independent variables were cultural identity and gender. The literature review identified varying results where EI, culture and gender are concerned, as well as a documented need for EI to be present both during and after college. Utilizing SurveyMonkey, this study was comprised of an instrument to measure participant EI (TEIQue-SF) and another (MEIM) to measure cultural identity and gender. This causal-comparative (ex post facto) study employed a two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) design to analyze data from 168 volunteer participants located at 29 Christian higher learning institutions located around the USA. The results of the study showed participants with low cultural identity scored significantly higher EI levels than moderate cultural identity participants. Additionally, female participant EI levels were significantly higher than those of the male participants. There was no statistically significant relationship on the interaction effect of participant EI levels based on their cultural identity and gender. Among other aspects of cultural identity and Christian college students, future research should explore the effect of cultural identity of Christian college students who have emigrated to study abroad.

Keywords: Christian higher education, cultural identity, emotional intelligence, two-way ANOVA, Social Cognitive Theory

Dedication

I dedicate this manuscript to my amazing "NVM" with all of my love. *Thank you* for your belief that I could actually do this…it means more to me than you know. Thank you for your acts of encouragement (AKA chocolate and McD's Cokes), help around the house, understanding about my grouchiness during stressful days, and most importantly for your prayers. You're simply the best! Victoria and Maria, Satan is a liar, and he will do his best to derail your lives. I pursued this degree out of obedience to God and my prayer is that you'll always obey His leading.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Using the Social Cognitive Theory, this study explored how cultural identity influences emotional intelligence (EI) in Christian college students studying in the United States. An understanding of the influence of cultural identity on EI will assist with the effort to ensure that the emotional needs of every college student are met. A study conducted by Choi and Chentsova-Dutton (2017) stressed the need for examining the role that culture plays in one's emotions. From Bible times to present day, there have existed countless examples of people who allowed emotions to cloud judgment. Research findings thus far have effectively indicated "individuals with high EI have a superior ability to manage emotions in stressful situations" (Saklofske, Austin, Mastoras, Beaton, & Osborne, 2012, p. 251). Yet, despite mounting evidence for the necessity of coupling cultural insight and EI training in order to assist with decision making, and with achieving academic, professional and social success, the research surrounding EI among diverse Christian college student bodies is almost non-existent.

Background

Are fabulous facilities, caring professors, highly engaged students and well-developed programs of study enough to ensure a successful outcome for every college student? Will a high IQ that is carefully challenged during a college career result in a guaranteed successful professional career? Will a college that values diversity in a student body meet the holistic needs of every single student? Will a student that is enrolled in a Christian college automatically espouse the belief that one's behavior should mimic Christ's?

As a result of improved modes of transportation in the past one hundred years and the advent of the Internet, the world is a much smaller place than it used to be. Paired with the

increase in the number of Hispanic, African American, and European American students enrolled in colleges (Watson & Watson, 2016), clarity about what the diverse student bodies of today need to learn in order to be successful during and after college is paramount. Culture shock, be it as a result of international students temporarily relocating to the United States for education purposes, or of a student who was reared near to her college of choice yet in a cultural identity different from the majority of the student body, is common and can manifest in various ways. A relationship between the environment of a college and student ethnicity exists (Ancis, Sedlacek & Mohr, 2000). "University administrators must consider the implications of changing demographics since students cannot be divorced from consideration of their diverse identities" (Ecklund, 2013, pp. 160, 165).

While an increase of minorities enrolled at America's colleges equates to many positive results, negative results have also been recorded. For example, "students from the Hispanic culture continue to underachieve academically and degree attainment remains a challenge" (Watson & Watson, 2016, p. 218). If colleges are currently adequate for the job of preparing today's students to be tomorrow's leaders, why the disparity between achievement levels among the students of various cultural identities enrolled in a school? Due to the increase in college enrollment among "international students, an increased attention in the literature on this student population" (Wang, Kim, & Ng, 2012, p. 160) has occurred. This study adds to the existing literature and provides insight into the need for Christian colleges to incorporate emotional intelligence (EI) training.

EI has emerged as "an important factor in the prediction of personal, academic and career success" (Kauts, 2016, p.152). In recent years, a pattern of interconnectedness between EI and academic success has emerged and, "a growing body of research indicates that emotional

intelligence is an important factor for student success" (Bryant & Malone, 2015, p. 1; Joshi, 2015). "Fortunately, EI can be taught" (Brackett & Rivers, 2014, para. 10). Brackett and Rivers (2014) further contend that providing formal EI education to students can result in positive effects with self-regulation, classroom management and classroom climate (para. 11). EI skills assist with the process of learning to handle "challenging situations constructively and ethically" (Byrnes, 2013, p. 99), as opposed to mishandling situations due to unregulated emotions. For the Christian college student, high EI translates to responding to emotions in a Christ honoring manner (Colossians 3:17).

"Basic emotions (happiness, surprise, sadness, fear, anger, disgust, etc.) can be defined as psychophysiological entities that are behaviorally observed and cross-culturally distinguished" (Marchewka et al., 2016, p. 2). "Psychophysiology concerns the study of cognitive, emotional and behavioral phenomena" (Tiberio, Cesta, & Belardinelli, 2013, p. 94). Stated simply, psychophysiological occurrences involve the merging of the mind and the body.

Although the 4th century philosopher, Plato, wrote of a "close relationship between feeling and thinking" (Zabrowski, 2016, p. 73), the concept of EI has a relatively short history. EI was "described by Salovey and Mayer in 1990, as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's own thinking and actions" (Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2011, p. 89). Since 1990, EI has garnered an ever- growing body of research. While most studies on the topic of "intelligence" focus on the intellect (IQ), EI research conducted in the past three decades substantiates the necessity of continued research regarding the intelligence of emotions. EI, also sometimes referred to as emotional quotient (EQ), social quotient (SQ), emotional and social competency

(ESCI), and social intelligence, and its presence in studies and research journals has been limited, yet "significant advances have been made" (Paulus & Yu, 2012, p. 476) of late.

Cherniss (2017) provides a timeline detailing the progression of modern EI research and shows how the available research proceeds from ancient musings to the early 1930s when Edward Thorndike authored a work on a topic he called "social intelligence." The focus of Thorndike's study examined how emotions affect "the ability to understand others, manage people, and act wisely in social contexts" (Seal, Naumann, Scott, & Royce-Davis, 2011, p. 3). In contrast to the educational and social contexts of the 19th century learning environment, such contexts of today are much more diverse, making the need for high levels EI all the more salient.

The Cherniss (2017) timeline of EI next passes through the 1940s and 1950s; the research of those decades suggested that EI was not only essential to success in life, but also described how people could build emotional strength (p. 19). From the mid-century to the 1980s there was a dearth of research but in 1985, Wayne Payne's dissertation on emotions introduced the term "emotional intelligence" (Mohanty, 2016, p. 374). In spite of the various contributions of the early EI researchers, Peter Salovey, John Mayer, and Daniel Goleman are most widely considered to be the pioneers of the idea that EI can be beneficial in life.

Emotions are described as "organizing responses because they adaptively focus cognitive activities and subsequent action" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 186). During the early 1990s, many researchers began to concentrate on a belief that emotions could inform how one acts and reacts. Research study results began to demonstrate how a command of one's emotions could assist with the avoidance of unfortunate reactions during heated circumstances. The push to establish a baseline body of knowledge about EI continued with Goleman's 1995 effort to expound on the Salovey and Mayer research.

Commonly accepted as the researcher that popularized the idea of determining the levels of EI possessed by research study participants, Goleman "conceived of EI as a new function that could be learned or could exist innately in some people" (Samad, 2014, p. 208). Until the 1990s, researchers of EI had only determined that a high IQ would not always guarantee success in life. Studies since Goleman's research in the late 1990s provide the answers for why that claim may be true. Those who possess a high IQ, along with higher levels of EI, often "are able to identify, assess, predict and take control of their own emotions as well as that of their team members" (Doe, Ndinguri, & Phipps, 2015, p. 105). Identification, assessment, prediction and control of emotions often translates into success not only at work, but also in school and in life. However, while some research has been conducted on the EI of the various cultures represented at America's higher learning institutions, no research pertains to EI and cultural identity among Christian institutions.

Although the Bible does not explicitly present the notion of EI, it has recorded how Christ's earthly life is the greatest example of a highly emotionally intelligent life. A description of the historical background of EI would be remiss for not mentioning that God's Word details many stories of men and women who made poor decisions during highly emotional situations. Biblical examples of people who made decisions as a result of what would now be classified as low EI include: Cain killing his brother out of anger (Genesis 4), fear causing Moses to commit murder and flee Israel (Exodus 2), jealousy leading a king to have a man killed (I Kings 21), and in II Samuel 11, David lusting after another man's wife.

The book of Proverbs and the biblical accounts of Hosea and Joseph all involve examples of high EI. Decisions have consequences and the book of Proverbs provides insight for anyone desirous of wisdom, or in other words, EI, during emotional times of decision-making. Proverbs

14:12 tells of the wisdom displayed when one seeks to do what is right in God's eyes, rather than what feels right. Immediate reactions to emotions can prove harmful; "wrath is cruel, anger is outrageous; but who is capable to stand before envy?" (Proverbs 27:4, KJV). The biblical account of Hosea is rife with examples of his high EI level behavior while dealing with the emotionally tumultuous relationship with his wife, Gomer. Gomer was repeatedly unfaithful to Hosea, yet in obedience to God, Hosea learned to love and therefore, connect emotionally with and correctly respond to his wayward wife and her behavior. Finally, an example of a man who experienced a highly emotional life is Joseph. Emotions such as anger, jealousy and resentment led to Joseph going from being the favored son of his father to a man sold into slavery and then falsely accused of rape. However, at no time does the Bible say that Joseph allowed his own emotional upheaval to affect his daily life; Joseph continually trusted God and behaved accordingly.

For believers to separate the management of emotions from God's authority would be ill advised and counter to God's plan. Additionally, if Christian colleges wish to afford students instruction that truly meets every need, the inclusion of EI skills training would prove valuable. Scazarro (2016) touted the importance of "listening to anger, sadness and fear; in other words, the importance of learning to experience emotions that lead to growth in others and self" (para. 6). When one listens to emotions for the purpose of understanding them, they can be dealt with while they remain emotions, rather than actions with potentially negative results that occur as a result of the emotions.

In order to best understand a relationship between EI and the cultural influence on Christian college students, this study utilized a theoretical framework of the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). The SCT "views human behavior as the product of the interactions between an

individual's environmental, cognitive, and personal factors" (Dooley & Schreckhise, 2013, p. 384). Included in those personal factors would be the concept of emotional intelligence.

Trait EI is one half of the two main conceptualizations of EI; the second is ability EI. The focus of this research was trait EI. "Essentially, the construct concerns people's perceptions of their emotional abilities, which is why it has also been labeled as 'trait emotional self-efficacy'" (Costa, Petrides, & Tillmann, 2014, p.182). Whereas trait EI deals more with people's perceptions, ability EI deals with EI skills ability. Strictly speaking, a noteworthy difference between trait and ability EI is the fact that trait EI is best measured by a self-report; ability EI is best measured by performance tests (Petrides, 2003). Because this study sought to understand the relationship between one's behavior when emotions are at play, and one's cultural identity, the SCT was appropriate since a college student's cultural identity and gender (environmental and personal factors), and an understanding of EI (cognition), were examined throughout the research process.

Two characteristics of a person possessing high EI levels include the ability to process cues from others, and the ability to understand the consequences of behavior (Bandura, 1999). As a result of this study's drawing on the SCT, leaders at Christian colleges would understand the need for emotionally intelligent behaviors to be taught and modeled for optimum learning of EI skills by all students. As an example, modeling can first occur through a professor teaching EI courses designed to present the material with a biblical worldview through his or her displays of appropriate behaviors. As the students progress through the EI course, their own EI levels could increase, and in turn, they could become models for others to see.

The "Social Cognitive Theory proposes that the relationship between environmental stimuli and behavior can be explained by individual cognitions regarding the anticipated

outcomes of a given behavior" (Hasking & Rose, 2016, p. 1568). Armed with such knowledge, stakeholders at both public and Christian colleges who seek to use the findings produced from this study as a basis for understanding how cultural identity can influence emotional health, could introduce EI course information into their present curricula, and design coursework that would teach students how to overcome their natural desires to respond automatically with a negative norm from their respective cultures during difficult emotional scenarios. More specifically, Christian college leaders would be able to take the same approaches, although ones filtered through the lens of a biblical worldview.

"New realities call for broadening the scope of cross-cultural analyses" (Bandura, 1999, p. 36). Ease of transport, the invention of the World Wide Web, and the growing use of the Internet as a means for getting an education from institutions located all around the world are three of the new realities behind today's highly global society. As a result of that new reality, college professors today often do not share similar cultural identity experiences and frames of references with many of their students. Moreover, recent years have seen a spike in the enrollment of minority groups at higher learning institutions (Sato & Hodge, 2015; Watson & Watson, 2016; Ecklund, 2013). Research conducted as a result of that uptick has provided insight into the success often experienced by college students that achieve higher levels of EI than those that do not. Thus far however, no research has been conducted to determine if cultural identity affects the EI levels of students enrolled in Christian colleges. This study aimed to fill that gap in the literature by specifically addressing the EI levels of students studying at Christian colleges located in the United States based on their cultural identity and gender.

Problem Statement

Research suggests that EI is necessary for success in life (Bellizzi, 2008; Tok, Tok, & Dolapcioglu, 2016; Batool, 2013). While there are studies dealing with the cultural differences in the expression and experience of emotions, few studies specifically deal with the concern that one's familial/cultural history plays a part in the emotional well-being of college students. Among Christian college students, the concern has not been addressed at all. Because "emotions are the primary motivators of behavior" (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2012, p. 95), it is important to conduct research using Christian college students as participants so as to better impart the wisdom of biblical EI to that student population. The old adage that "we learn what we live" is applicable where the teaching of EI is concerned. The presence of a hidden curriculum in every classroom means that even if EI skills are not explicitly taught in college classes, by default, students learn about emotion management or mismanagement from the actions, reactions, beliefs and examples set forth by everyone present in the classroom. "It is important then for schools to consider ways to incorporate emotional intelligence skills into each student's 'toolbox' for enhanced career success" (Tucker, Sojka, Barone, & McCarthy, 2010, p. 331). "One of the values of a college education is that it offers a chance to become well-adjusted; a well-adjusted person has achieved a balance among physical, emotional and social needs" (Kanar, 2012, p. 306). The Christian college experience should, therefore, provide the opportunity of being well adjusted through the lens of a biblical worldview.

"We are fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14, NKJV); God created man with emotions. Gliebe (2012) asserted "the totality of the Christian higher education experience of students needs to come together under the lordship of Christ and the authority of Scripture" (p. 257), yet there remains a paucity of research relating specifically to EI instruction at Christian

colleges. Those two reasons contributed to the desire to conduct this study which sought to determine the current EI levels of students at Christian colleges in the USA. The results that were generated will facilitate how to best meet the emotional needs of Christian college students. The inclusion of faith based EI skills training as a result of this study could allow Christian college students to go from the classroom to their chosen careers with EI borne from a biblical perspective. Armed with such skills, God can be glorified through the behaviors of those individuals. The roots of the vital need to teach EI in colleges are found in previous research that proves "the skills of emotional intelligence, such as recognizing emotions in self and others, understanding the causes and consequence of emotions, and effectively regulating the experience and expression of emotional responses, are essential for success in school and life" (Torrente, Rivers, & Brackett, 2016, p. 325). Although that sentiment was not necessarily written with the Christian college student in mind, the statement would apply to Christian colleges, too. The necessity for this research study was borne from the problem that no research has been conducted to examine the effect of cultural identity on the EI levels of students attending American Christian colleges and only a few studies have examined EI levels of Christian (non-parochial) college students (Samples, 2009; Gliebe, 2012; Davis, 2013; Stowell, 2017).

Purpose Statement

Due to the lack of research relating to cultural identity and the EI of Christian college students, the purpose of this quantitative, causal-comparative study was to determine the effect of cultural identity and gender on EI levels among students enrolled in America's Christian colleges. By doing so, a glimpse of the EI levels of Christian college students is also provided. As previously noted, EI deals with the ability to properly manage emotions. As American

college campuses become increasingly more diverse, attention to the culturally inherent levels of EI will prove useful. Ma (2003) believes that future studies should consider how cultural diversity plays a part in the educational process and concluded that "demographic differences" (p. 321) play a role in the college student's educational experience. This study investigated how demographic differences, such as upbringing/culture/cultural identity, can affect the EI levels of Christian college students.

Ideally, an understanding of how a college student's cultural upbringing can contribute to a potentially negative response to a flood of emotions may engender the creation of culturally relevant EI courses. "Teachers must empower students to succeed by providing them with a learning environment which respects their culture, embraces their diversity, and celebrates their differences" (Savage, 2005, para.10). EI courses that are relevant to the specific diversity represented in an audience may result in students gaining an understanding about how to make wise decisions when faced with an emotional crisis. Research indicates that teaching awareness and regulation of emotions can lead to an avoidance of "problematic emotional intensity" (Gross & Jazaeiri, 2014, p. 389). Further, without research study results which support the need for EI skills training at biblically centered higher education institutions, Christian college students could be left to their own devices where emotion management is concerned. "The explicit communication of how Satan will attempt to thwart God's plan in the Christian college student's life" (Dustman, 2018, p. 185) through emotions is evident and must, therefore, be included in the curricula of today's Christian higher learning institutions. By neglecting to research and teach EI skills, Christian educators fail to equip students for "the battle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan which rages within emotional life" (Gliebe, 2012, p. 200).

Significance of the Study

As previously stated, there is a lack of research directed to the discovery of the effect that cultural identity can have on one's EI level. As a general rule, Christian colleges have been overlooked where research on EI is concerned. This study's findings build on the anemic existing EI research knowledge base, and as this study took place at Christian college campuses, it provides a novel contribution to the literature regarding how cultures from around the world often have differing views on how to respond to and utilize emotions.

Whether a minority college student relocates from a different country to attend college in the USA or has grown up in the same town as the college, he or she may possess very "different views on interacting with those who are different from themselves in race, sex, age, ability, or anything else" (Behjat & Chowdhury, 2012, p. 309). The authors further posit that much more research is necessary for the sake of gaining a clearer picture of emotions and interactions with diverse cultures. "Variations among cultures make the development of EI both more necessary and complex" (Tompkins, Galbraith, & Bas, 2011, p. 8), necessitating additional research involving more diverse backgrounds (Tombs, Russell-Bennett, & Ashkanasy, 2014; Watson & Watson, 2016; Behjat & Chowdhury, 2012; Tompkins, Galbraith, & Bas, 2011; Daryani, Aali, Amini, & Shareghi, 2017).

While specifically designed to investigate a connection between EI and cultural identity among students at Christian colleges in the USA, the findings of this research could benefit all schools and their stakeholders that have an interest in knowing how diverse student bodies respond when faced with circumstances that inspire stress, anger, elation, excitement, jealousy, depression, worry, or sadness, etc. For Christian colleges, data from this study pinpoints areas of student needs that can be addressed by the schools with the implementation of biblically based

EI skills training. In addition to schools, places of employ could glean information from this study as a means of understanding how diversity among employees means everyone employed by a company needs to possess an understanding of EI as it pertains to the cultural identity of fellow employees. This information would also prove beneficial to hiring managers who understand that in order to create a healthier work "climate, the hiring of emotionally mature persons and the development of EI among existing employees" (Kannaiah & Shanthi, 2015, p. 153) are crucial" (Metcalfe, 2014, p. 45), such as resulted from this study.

Research Question

RQ: Is there a difference between the emotional intelligence levels of male Christian college students, female Christian college students, and both male and female Christian college students based on cultural identity?

Definitions

1. *Acculturative Stress* – Acculturative stress is stress which accompanies the need to adapt to a new culture and operate in an environment lacking in the strength of accustomed cultural attachment (Hansen, Shneyderman, McNamara, & Grace, 2018).

2. *Alienation* – Alienation is the state of experience of being isolated from a group or an activity to which one should belong, or in which one should be involved (Joshi, 2015, p. 329).

3. *Career Readiness* – Career readiness is the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace (Career Readiness, 2018, para. 3).

4. *Causal-Comparative Research* - Causal-comparative research attempts to determine the cause of differences that already exist between or among groups of individuals (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2017).

5. *Christian College* - A Christian college is a school that purposely incorporates a lens of a biblical worldview to inform the academic offerings provided to its students.

6. *Commuter Students* – Commuter students are "students not living in university owned/operated housing located on campus" (Jacoby & Girrell, 1981) while taking on campus courses.

7. *Cultural Identity* – Cultural identity is one's claim to cultural practices, values, and identifications (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010).

8. *Culture* – Culture is learned routines of thinking, feeling, and interacting with other people, as well as a corpus of substantive assertions and ideas about aspects of the world; it is shared among a collection of interconnected individuals who are often demarcated by race, ethnicity, or nationality (Jahoda, 2012, p. 294).

9. *Diversity* – Diversity is the variation in the human capital profile of the organization/people from different races, religions, perspectives, etc., therefore different cultures, values, beliefs, and reactions to the organizational environment (Roberson, 2004).

10. *Emotional intelligence* – Emotional Intelligence *(EI) is* the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, and to use them to guide thinking and behavior (Kauts, 2016).

11. *Emotions* – Emotions are psychophysiological entities that are behaviorally observed and cross-culturally distinguished (Marchewka et al., 2016).

12. *Employability* – Employability is the capability of getting and keeping a job (Paadi, 2014, p. 130).

13. *Psychophysiology* – Psychophysiology is the study of cognitive, emotional and behavioral phenomena (Tiberio, Cesta, & Belardinelli, 2013).

14. *Quantitative Study* – A quantitative study is characterized by objective measurement, usually numbers (Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2013).

15. *Residential Students* – Residential students are "students living in university owned/operated housing located on campus" (Jacoby & Girrell, 1981) while taking on campus courses.

16. *Self-efficacy* – Self-efficacy is a person's beliefs in one's capabilities (Artino, 2012).

17. *Social Cognitive Theory* – *The SCT* views human behavior/learning as the product of the interactions between an individual's environmental, cognitive, and behavioral factors (Dooley & Schreckhise, 2013).

18. *Trait Emotional Intelligence* – Trait EI is a constellation of emotional self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies *(*Torres-Coronas & Vidal-Blasco, 2017) and is best measured by a self-report (Petrides, 2003).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

"Emotions matter and they matter a great deal in school" (Brackett & Rivers, 2011, p. 32). Experiencing emotions that are unrecognized or ignored can mean that the learning process, social relationships and one's testimony for Christ can be affected. For those reasons, emotional intelligence (EI) should be a focus at Christian colleges and specifically, a culturally relevant approach to emotions with a biblical worldview. In fact, EI is attributed to "enhancing the daily smooth functioning of schools, facilitating students' holistic development, and enabling student capability for learning" (Byrnes, 2013, p. 99). Learning to be emotionally intelligent "is as important as learning any other subject" (Eddanur, 2010, p. 115). Eddanur (2010) believes that the factors that lead to unsuccessful schools and student failure stem from a lack of EI in schools. Students reared in a cultural identity different from the majority at America's colleges "experience high levels of acculturative stress, which can adversely affect their college success" (Hansen, Shneyderman, McNamara, & Grace, 2018, p. 215). School and student failure attributed to low EI were demonstrated similarly in the study conducted by Ikepsu (2017), where the research indicated that "negative emotions such as fear, anger, and hostility use up more energy and lower morale which consequently leads to absenteeism and apathy" (p. 55).

There is a growing belief among researchers that the teaching of EI skills on college campuses is beneficial and necessary (Gliebe, 2012; Yarrish & Law, 2009; Fernández-Berrocal & Ruiz, 2008; Scott & Malone, 2015). Bandura's (1991) Social Cognitive Theory was a suitable framework for this study since both the theory and EI relate to cognitive, behavioral and environmental factors. The main purpose of this study was to examine the difference between Christian college student EI and gender on cultural identity. As this study demonstrated, EI

should be explicitly taught in Christian colleges for the purpose of improving student EI levels, the learning process, school environments, interpersonal relationships, behaviors, job skills, employability, and one's relationship with Christ. Such improvements will help facilitate the meeting of as many college students' needs as possible and will, in turn, assist with the successful attainment of college goals.

Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Theory

In order to effectively guide the study and allow the findings to be embedded within a greater context, the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) was the theoretical framework for this study. Bandura (1991) developed the SCT, which is the idea that cognitive, behavioral and environmental factors inform the learning process. Whether the learning process is of a very young child learning by mimicking the behaviors of those around him, or a formal learning process within the confines of a college classroom, both have ties to SCT. Because the earliest stages of EI learning happen as a result of the modeling of both healthy and unhealthy emotions from one's environment, the SCT is an appropriate theory for this study. Bandura (2001), however, also believes that human actions are not simply results of imitative behaviors; humans possess control over their own behaviors, including how to properly respond during emotion related scenarios.

Cognitive factors. Misunderstood and rampant emotions of self and of others have implications beyond one's mood. Brackett, Rivers, and Salovey (2011) stated that "emotions like anger, happiness and fear influence how people think and make decisions" (p. 89). One goal of any college is to impart as much intellectual knowledge about each student's chosen field of study and curriculum designers for colleges should not overlook the need for materials that also

teach the skills to regulate, manage, understand and respond to the emotions associated with college life and beyond.

"Emotional states influence subsequent cognitions and behaviors" (Myrick, 2016, p. 422). If one allows unregulated emotions to contribute to the decisions behind behaviors, the results could prove disastrous. For example, should an angry or frustrated driver experiencing negative emotions immediately begin to think about smashing a nearby windshield? Similarly, the end result of emotions that are still running high from a recent argument does not have to include destructive behavior. Self-regulatory skills are needed when emotions become overwhelming and threaten the cognitive processes of college students.

Behavioral factors. "Bandura proposed the SCT to explain human behavior" (Lin & Hsu, 2015, p. 326). As noted in the previous chapter, there are both modern and ancient examples of people who allowed negative emotions to exert insidious influence. Van Brummelen (2009) suggested that students "whose emotional skills are lacking will have difficulty functioning properly" (p. 238). In a world where prisons are filled with people who could not control their emotions and therefore acted in the heat of the moment, an understanding about how to "control impulses" (Kanar, 2012, p. 306) and an understanding of the feelings behind those impulses could prove beneficial.

Bandura (1994) believes it is important to teach how to "reduce stress reactions and alter their negative proclivities" (para. 11). Lin and Hsu (2015) studied the beliefs of Bandura and found that that one's behavior can assist with the production of desired effects. In fact, while research on the negative side of emotions is prevalent, the research of how positive emotions are beneficial has been less available, to date. Ioffik (2017), in a study conducted with more than 60 participants, sought to determine why positive emotions should be expressed and found

compelling evidence linking the sharing of thoughts and feelings to the influence one can have on others. Depending on the thoughts and feelings shared, one has the power to both positively and negatively affect others. Positive emotions "help to envision goals and challenges, open the mind to thoughts and problem-solving, protect health, create attachments, lay the groundwork for self-regulation and guide behavior" (Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002, p. 149). Based on their study findings, the authors went on to suggest "positive emotions are important for both students and teachers" (p. 150).

Environmental factors. In every classroom exists a hidden curriculum of EI (Alsubie, 2015). Additionally, the home environment of every student includes a hidden emotional curriculum whether the inhabitants of the home realize it or not. "Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a person learns only the particular thing he is studying at the time" (What counts, 2011, para. 1). The emotions that each person experiences, and the resulting behaviors exhibited, can be observed and imitated. Those preparing EI learning content for higher learning institutions must consider and plan for two facets of emotional behavior. First, those that the students will bring with them from their homes and communities as a part of their cultural upbringing, and also, those which will be modeled by fellow students, instructors, administration, and staff. Research suggests that it is necessary to address the need for EI skills training on Christian college campuses to "ensure the faculty understands the importance of EI skills. (Gliebe, 2012, p. 202).

Because every member of a class has certain responses, beliefs and values as a result of their culture embedded within, educators should "equip students with the intellectual tools and self-regulatory capabilities" (Lin & Hsu, 2015, p. 281) needed to manage one's behaviors. In other words, educators should teach how to "help [an] individual adapt to his or her environment,

taking into account the internal state of the individual, the characteristics and determinants of the valuation process and the characteristics of the environment" (Paulus & Yu, 2012, p. 476).

Regardless of one's cultural background, college students must "develop competencies, self-beliefs or efficacy to exercise control and self-regulatory capabilities for influencing [their] own motivation and actions" (Bandura, 1989, p. 7). With age, specifically that of college-aged students, comes a societal expectation that maturity levels have been increasing over time. However, not all students mature at the same rate. Sadly, it is also important to note that not all students come from secure and emotionally intelligent home environs that contribute to maturity. Additionally, the fact that a home is filled with those that identify as Christians does not mean it will automatically be a place where every member of the family is equipped with the knowledge that can foster positive emotional health. These reasons contributed to the need for this research study designed to investigate the interaction between Christian college students' cultural identity and gender on EI levels.

Related Literature

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as an avenue for understanding the difference between feelings and rational thought. EI has "gained popularity in recent decades and is associated with appropriately identifying, recognizing and managing emotions for one's own well-being and the well-being of others" (Garg & Singh, 2016, p. 406). Besides a thorough understanding of how one can determine what emotions are being experienced and how they might affect the rational decision-making process, research on EI has led to the belief that it is EI, not IQ, that can be the most "instrumental in achieving success in many areas of life" (Garg & Singh, 2016, p. 405; Goleman, 1998).

Many studies referenced in this paper point to the various positives attributable to an understanding of EI; Tench (2016) proclaimed that those who are emotionally intelligent "have strong self-awareness, manage their emotions adroitly, handle relationships with others extremely well, and welcome diversity" (pp. 4-5). EI has come to be known as the compilation of four central domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management (Goleman, 1998). The domains pertinent to this research study of Christian college students in America include three of the four: self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness.

  Self-awareness. Self-awareness is an understanding of one's feelings; it is the idea that one can consciously examine, process and label what is being felt emotionally. It also provides insight into what might be causing one to want to naturally react to a situation being experienced at that moment. "That conscious processing is capable of impacting emotion is well documented" (Kassam & Mendes, 2013, p. 1). As with all habits, emotional habits are not instantaneously formed, but rather are formed over time. Self-awareness can assist with the recognition and elimination of emotional bad habits.

  To be self-aware means to reflect on or examine self; doing so can mean that one may be able to discern when negative emotions threaten to cause faulty thinking. Once that discernment has been made, the emotionally intelligent Christian college student may be better equipped to reroute the effect of the emotions to more constructive pursuits. Also, to be self-aware includes having the ability to assess the appropriateness of one's typical behavior, as learned and practiced by one's cultural identity, "by relating to the surrounding circumstances and behaving according to the norms of the local community" (Hassan, Robani, & Bokhari, 2015, p. 112). The importance of self-awareness lies in the understanding "of what issues or conditions elevate or

permeate emotions" (Clancy, 2014, para. 4). In other words, an understanding of all of the factors contributing to an emotional state is necessary for self-awareness to fully occur.

Take, for example, someone who wishes to intentionally irritate another. When one is able to reflect on the emotions that occur as a result of another's manipulations and at the same time, reconcile with the fact that the irritation was purposely planned, it becomes easier to avoid an angry, knee-jerk response. It is often the students that are struggling at school, be it academically or socially, that are unable to connect feelings with thoughts and behaviors (Chong, Lee, Roslan, & Baba, 2015). If colleges teach EI skills, students may learn to connect feelings with behaviors, thereby learning to resist the urge to give in to the raw and intense emotions that are often associated with social interaction. Furthermore, if Christian colleges teach biblically based EI skills, students would be taught measures that could help them to be aware of their challenging emotions and aware of how choosing a constructive reaction, such as "turning the other cheek" (Matthew 5:39), can be better than lashing out. As another example, Goleman and Lippincott (2017) described how learning to be self-aware showed one study participant how to be more "aware of his own high levels of anxiety, and how that tended to impair his thinking" (para. 10). Impaired thinking should be limited in order to "reduce emotion-related expressive behavior" (Kassam & Mendes, 2013, p. 1). "The goal of the self-awareness process is to create better self-knowledge, make adjustments and improvements, and accommodate for weaknesses" (Steiner, 2014, para. 3).

Self-management. Once self-awareness has occurred, self-management can occur. Self-management, also known as self-regulation, is a synonym of self-control. Chong, Lee, Roslan & Baba (2015) stated that in order to truly "gain success at school, students should have self-control to hinder any problematic behavior" (p. 6) that could result from negative emotions. The

old saying "act now, think later" would be an excellent motto for the merging of a lack of self-control and emotions. Contrastingly, "the emotionally intelligent individual remains aware of his or her emotions and manages those emotions in the moment to respond appropriately and productively to events and situations" (Gardenswartz, Cherbosque, & Rowe, 2010, p. 74). Stated another way, "the ability to keep one's own emotions and impulses in check, to remain calm in unhealthy situations and maintain composure irrespective of one's emotions" (Ikepesu, 2017, p. 53) is another definition of emotional self-management.

Whether experienced on a public or Christian college campus, frustration, anxiety, discontentment, and apathy are all negative emotions a student can encounter. Besides the general Christian college student population, EI has been shown to assist those college students who, as a result of ADHD and similar disorders, find self-control a difficult task. Research shows that through coaching, students were able to become "more self-regulating which led to positive academic experiences and outcomes" (Parker, Hoffman, Sawilowski, & Rolands, 2013, p. 215). Coaching, in other words EI skills training on how to use positive emotions and avoid negative emotions and reactions, can prove beneficial since positive emotions are correlated to problem solving and self-managing students (Zhou, 2013). "Positive emotions are essential for human behavior and adaptation" (Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002, p. 149).

For Christian college campuses, teaching self-management/self-control has its foundation in God's Word through His reminder that, "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and hath no walls" (Proverbs 25:28, KJV). Christian college students, as is true for all mankind because of sin nature, must guard against the possibility of being ruled by emotions, and must properly defend against negative emotions and the reactions that can come about as a result of negative interactions with classmates that are different from the "norm."

"To gain success at school, students should have self-control" (Chong, Lee, Roslan & Baba, 2015, p. 6). Rather than acting with an immediate negative reaction in the face of powerful emotions, students would be better served by taking the time to ascertain what the issues are and self-manage the control of emotions and the resulting behaviors. EI skills training would teach students to sift through their feelings before reacting during emotional outbursts. Since self-control is desired by God (Titus 2:2) and is helpful in maintaining one's testimony, this truth would resonate with the beliefs of those in leadership at Christian colleges and those of the students. In fact, God reminds us to remain focused on Him so as to behave obediently (2 Corinthians 10:5). Specifically, it is self-management for the regulation of emotions that "is the most important predictor of positive intercultural adjustment" (Bagheri, Kosnin, & Besharat, 2013, p. 125).

Social awareness. To be socially aware is to have the "ability to empathize, serve, and leverage diversity" (O'Meara, Knudson, & Jones, 2013, p. 332). Admittedly, there are aspects of college life that are best handled in isolation; however, the college experiences of living with roommates, participating in team sports, and attending classes, chapels and social events with fellow students, are by and large a communal experience. As students from all over the world venture into colleges and universities, they will encounter diverse fellow students and faculty members who possess divergent approaches to emotions and the decision-making process. As college campuses grow more and more diverse, higher education institutions of all sizes should consider the importance of EI skills training for student bodies.

Although emotions are known as "universal phenomena, most researchers believe that the way they are being experienced, expressed, perceived and regulated can be influenced by social norms" (Bagheri, Kosnin, & Besharat, 2013, p. 123). When students with diverse beliefs and

attitudes, meld in a classroom for the purpose of cooperative learning, Bagheri, Kosnin, and Besharat (2013) discovered through their study of the influence of culture on EI, that those differences in beliefs and attitudes can cause misunderstandings. In terms of the college experience, "a group of young men and women coming from different backgrounds are expected to imbibe the attitudes and qualities necessary for living together" (Joshi, 2015, p. 330); EI skills can assist with the accomplishment of that expectation.

Understanding that college campuses are more culturally diverse today than ever will assist with accomplishing social-awareness. In order to interact well with those that are different culturally, one must understand how such diversity can enter into everyday actions and behaviors. God has commanded that believers "go into all the world" (Mark 16:15, KJV), which means it will be necessary to interact and connect with cultures that are different from a believer's norm. When believers actively interact and connect with diverse populations, it will become glaringly obvious that social-awareness is vital. Providing a biblical basis to EI for Christian college students will encourage those students to rely on God's power and wisdom instead of one's own willpower to do what is right in the face of acute emotional stress.

Social awareness learning, as part of EI skills training on Christian college campuses, can help "give students the crucial foundations and skills for becoming caring, empathetic, responsible and compassionate citizens" (Zeidner & Matthews, 2017, p.170) of the world. Providing insight into the various ways that the different cultures represented in a student body can experience and respond to a litany of emotions, such as frustration, despair, vengeance, anxiety, rejection, grief and excitement, can mean the avoidance of conflict. Being socially aware of how to read the feelings of those with whom the students differ culturally can assist students with their efforts to function properly and to coexist respectfully.

Emotional Intelligence Through a Biblical Lens

As the Creator and Designer of human emotions, God has a specific view of and opinion about how they are to be managed. In fact, His Word provides a reminder that He cares deeply about emotional states when it declares, "He heals the brokenhearted" (Psalms 147:3, KJV). God's Word is clear there is an appropriate "time to weep, and a time to laugh" (Ecclesiastes 3:4, KJV). God created the soul to be the seat of affections, desires, and so of the emotions (I Thessalonians 5:28). "All emotions are, in essence, inclinations to react, the instant plans for handling life that God has instilled in us" (Kelleman, 2014, para. 2). All three aforementioned domains of EI highlighted in this study, self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness, have biblical foundations. The intentional practice of those domains will help Christian college students be better Image Bearers of Christ; to do so can facilitate the choosing of the appropriate interactions that will most honor Christ (Kelleman, 2014).

A life ruled by emotions can occur when one allows emotions to be the center of life and the guiding factor behind critical decision-making. For example, consider how the one who allows strong emotions to inform decisions concerning morality may ultimately sin as a result of those impulses. To the one who says that promiscuity or sins of the flesh are fun, bring happiness and feel good, it is important to remember that while fun for a time, the giving in to those emotionally charged sinful desires is fundamentally opposed to God's moral design (Galatians 5:19). As another example, when one never acknowledges or deals with a simmering anger, the end result could be catastrophic. The Bible says, "anger resteth in the bosom of fools (Ecclesiastes 7:9, KJV), and using a more descriptive translation, we see the literal possibility of how "anger lodges in the bosom of fools" (Ecclesiastes 7:9, ESV).

Due to the fact that a basic tenet of Christianity is to strive to be like Christ, it could be assumed that many Christians are, by nature, more emotionally intelligent than those who do not profess Christ. However, such a claim would require a separate research study/dissertation and that assumption was not applied to this study. Because of the prominent role that emotions can play in life, the need to include a view of emotions through the lens of God's Word in Christian college course programming is necessary. The student population of Christian colleges would not be immune to the need for an understanding of how emotions can affect daily lives and how skills to combat the tendency to allow emotions to rule are important. While many students on Christian college campuses would claim Jesus as their Lord and Savior, not all have been taught or have grasped the importance of allowing the Holy Spirit to work in every single area of life. Christian college students should be taught the spiritual and physical realities of emotions; they need skills training to help them understand and recognize the power of emotions and still more training to provide them with constructive ammunition for when emotions begin to deceive. Disbelief about the deceitfulness and untrustworthiness of feelings can cause believers to "grieve the Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 4:30). To live a Christ-like life means to behave as Christ would during emotional eruptions. Christian colleges should not only provide skills training which would assist students with cognitive and physical pursuits, but also provide a biblical view of emotion management.

"Many primary emotions are closely related to biblical commands" (Van Brummelen, 2009, p. 288). The greatest example of emotionally intelligent behavior is that of Jesus Christ. His control of emotions is mentioned in I Peter 2:23, "when He was reviled, He reviled not; when He suffered, He threatened not" (KJV). In I John 15:11, Christ experienced great joy and wanted to share that emotion with others. Any EI course materials designed for Christian

colleges should include reminders to emulate Christ's behavior concerning both positive and negative emotions. When emotions threaten to overwhelm, a Christian can give in and, therefore react however one's mood, feelings, or upbringing lead, or they can go to God and request "when my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher" (Psalms 61:2). Christians should allow God to lead rather than their emotions. Ensuring that college students are presented with curricula that addresses how to know the mind of God where emotions are concerned can help students approach emotionally chaotic situations with healthy, respectful, constructive and God honoring behaviors.

In Proverbs 16:3, God's Word advises being slow to anger. In other words, feelings such as anger should neither be a Christian's automatic response nor precipitate negative behaviors. While it would be irrational to expect to lead a life 100% free from the effects of potentially harmful emotions, when they do occur, they should not lead one to sin. Fortunately, self-control and delayed gratification are skills that can be taught and learned; Christians must "die to self" (Galatians 2:20) and allow the Holy Spirit to guide when threatened by overwhelming emotions (John 14:26). In I Timothy 4:16, the Bible counsels Believers to "take heed to self," in other words, to pay attention, to notice, to be self-aware. Similarly, the Bible speaks to self-management, or self-control in the passage of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:23. One effect of a sinful nature is the natural tendency to want to immediately react against intensely emotional situations, rather than to process the emotions that are threatening to rule. Having a biblical view of self-control where emotions are concerned can mean the difference between losing one's testimony and honoring God with behaviors.

Emotional Intelligence and Cultural Identity

In Genesis 1, it is clear that God created man in His image. It is important to note that the Old Testament details the ethnic diversity of the people of that time period. Regardless of any differences, all of mankind is joined together in unity and equality under the creation of God (Galatians 3:28). The Department of Commerce estimates that "international students contribute nearly $20 billion to the US economy, yet little research considers the variances due to the cultural origins of these students" (Wang, Kim, & Ng, 2012, p. 160). "Cultural factors have a strong influence on the control of emotional expression and perception" (Jurgens, Drolet, Pirow, Scheiner, & Fischer, 2013, p. 1) and due to today's highly global society, those cultural factors should be investigated for the sake of all present on Christian college campuses.

Despite the fact that college students who most identify with the Hispanic culture are attending American colleges in record numbers, "degree attainment remains a challenge" (Watson & Watson, 2016, p. 218). Interestingly, in a report by BestColleges.com (2016), it was noted, "the very best schools, as rated by U.S. News and World Report, tend to be particularly diverse" (para. 9). However, regardless of the record high registration numbers associated with diverse college students or the rankings associated with quality educational processes, America's higher education institutions are not necessarily meeting the diverse needs representative of the student bodies. Sometimes among diverse student bodies, "there isn't a central dominant culture, but then where do you find the norm? Which culture becomes the centralizing norm" (McKnight, 2012, para. 11)? A greater understanding of emotions and EI skills training at Christian colleges can be a remedy for those issues because when students have learned about and espoused the tenets of EI, they can more successfully embrace and interact positively with people from all cultures (Ang, Rocksthul, & Tan, 2015; Truninger, Fernandez-i-Marin, Batista-Foguet, Boyatzis, & Serlavos, 2018).

"A variety of psychophysiological studies have documented differences between cultural groups" (Gatzke-Kopp, 2016, p. 5). However, the literature surrounding the EI of college students includes only four studies of Christian college students (Samples, 2009; Gliebe, 2012; Davis, 2013; Stowell, 2017) and zero research studies that specifically detail the influence of one's cultural identity on personal EI levels in Christian higher learning institutions. As a result, this chapter provides a knowledge base of the terms *culture* and *cultural identity* and will utilize that information to explain how those terms inform the way diverse groups understand and use emotions.

Culture is defined as "learned routines of thinking, feeling, and interacting with other people, as well as assertions and ideas about aspects of the world; it is shared among a collection of interconnected individuals who are often demarcated by race, ethnicity, or nationality" (Jahoda, 2012, p. 294). The passing on of those learned routines from one generation to the next is cultural heritage; *cultural identity* is one's claim to cultural practices, values, and identifications (Morris, 2014). Phinney and Ong defined a synonym of cultural identity, *ethnic identity*, as thoughts and feelings about one's ethnic group membership" (as cited in Yap et al., 2014, p. 437).

Students who identify with countries termed "Hispanic" accounted for a 201% increase at America's colleges between the years of 1993 and 2013 (Watson & Watson, 2016). With those students come certain culturally related beliefs concerning how to deal with emotions. As another example, it has been reported that the potential differences in opinions regarding emotions between cultural identity groups exist in the differences between "what motivates one culture to prosocial behavior and what motivates the other" (Garner, Mahatmya, Brown, & Vesely, 2014, p. 169). In other words, cultural differences play a specific part in student

decision-making and behaviors. With multi-cultural environments such as those within America's colleges of today comes the responsibility of understanding "how to be successful in this global era" (Eken, Ozturgut, & Craven, 2014, p. 154). Kar, Saha, and Mondal's (2014) research claimed, "EI has been highly predisposed by the culture of the society in which the individual belongs" (p. 194). Such evidence parallels the findings resulting from a study by Garner, Mahatmya, Brown, and Vesely (2014) that claimed, "emotional competence is sometimes manifested in ways that are specific to cultural characteristics" (p. 165). "Experiences that are normative for one group may be unusual for another" (Gatzke-Kopp, 2016, p. 6). During a study conducted with 300 diverse team members residing in Australia, Lloyd and Hartel (2010) discovered that the literature on cultural diversity supports a belief that diverse groups often lack cohesion and a lack of cohesion can lead to frustration, resentment and isolation. As a result, an understanding of the "feelings and attitudes embodied in the behavior of culturally different others" (Lloyd & Hartel, 2010, p. 859) is therefore pertinent.

The reality of today's college campuses means that students "work across borders, cultures and very diverse team members and these challenges make EI foundational for success" (Derven, 2014, para. 6). That being said, those working at today's Christian colleges, and those interested in Christian college related research, may not be fully aware of what students need in order to survive and to thrive in a multicultural environment. The proof of such an assertion rests in the fact that no studies relating to EI and cultural diversity, to date, have been conducted among the Christian college student population. By omitting the intentional teaching of EI skills through an understanding of the differing positions of emotions management held among various cultures, colleges, by default, promote to students the idea of doing whatever one thinks one should do in order to succeed. Instead, both secular and Christian colleges should endeavor to

impart EI knowledge, and Christian colleges should do so with the intent of providing students with biblical insight on the topic.

Gunkel, Schlagel, and Engle (2014) believe that what a society deems important is determined by culture, meaning "cultural norms determine the meaning of emotions and the controlling of them" (p. 256). That research study conducted by Gunkel, Schlagel, and Engle sought to determine how national cultural values influenced nine diverse groupings of public university students in the USA. Their research claimed, "a person who is emotionally intelligent in one culture, might not be that in another" (p. 257). An opposite perspective was brought to bear through a study which produced results stating, there were no statistically significant differences based on student cultures (Adams, 2011). Unfortunately, the research surrounding EI levels, Christian college students, and cross-cultural intermingling continues to be overlooked, hence the gap that this study sought to address. The data accumulated from this study could help Christian college educators and students "shape how they interact with different cultures" (Hutchison & Gerstein, 2016, p. 138).

Today's colleges, workforce and society are continuously more diverse than in previous generations. "People worldwide are becoming increasingly enmeshed in a cyber world that transcends time, distance and place; mass transnational migrations of people seeking a better life, and employees of multinational corporations with more cosmopolitan orientations are changing cultural landscapes" (Lin & Hsu, 2015, p. 285). Whereas college campuses on American soil once primarily catered to those students who grew up nearby and who were raised in the ways of the local culture, today's American college campuses are increasingly more comprised of students that come from many lands and cultures. It would not be off the mark to say that, in

effect, God's sovereignty has brought the mission field to the college campuses of the United States.

"Cultural diversity is now part of everyday life and an unavoidable condition; what qualifications do we need to live in this environment" (Hong, 2013, p.112)? Neither cultural identity awareness nor cohesion are achieved simply because college campuses, classrooms and dormitories are more diverse than ever before. Furthermore, cultural identity awareness is not achieved simply because some colleges seek to place a biblical view on the topic of diversity. Similarly, EI is not achieved simply because it is advised by a body of researchers. Research shows that "the communication of emotions significantly differs across cultures" (Gunkel, Shlagel, & Engle, 2014, p. 258) and those working in America's colleges will have to deliberately seek to bridge any emotional processing gaps across the cultures represented among their student bodies.

"Significant differences in emotion judgments and emotional expressions were noticed among college students with cultural backgrounds of White, African American, Hispanic, and Asian ethnicities" (Wang, Kim, & Ng, 2012, p. 162). When students are faced with varying EI levels and displays of emotions that are "inconsistent with preexisting attitudes and perspectives, students must either reconcile the new experiences with their existing experiences or they must change their perspectives to fit the new" (Bowman & Denson, 2011, p. 224). Alienation, in other words, an international college student's feeling of isolation from the others on campus can cause that student to "feel that college is incomplete unless they can find others in the campus environment that they can relate to" (Joshi, 2015, p. 330). For these reasons and more, Christian colleges "need to provide culturally appropriate instruction" (Zeidner & Matthews, 2017, p.174).

Different cultures measure emotions such as happiness in different ways; they also experience emotions in varying degrees. "The US and the UK have begun to understand that being from one of the most industrialized, rich and influential countries on the planet does not guarantee that citizens are happy" (Fernández-Berrocal & Ruiz, 2008, p. 432). Factors such as "social status, and stigma are likely to play a role in the accuracy with which ethnic groups recognize emotions" (Whitman, Kraus, & Van Rooy, 2014, p. 200). Simply said, the fact that one should be happy does not necessarily guarantee happiness. Additionally, whereas those from the western world place a high value on the attainment and appearance of happiness, those hailing from Eastern Asia place more value on "belonging, social harmony and interpersonal relationships" (Joshanloo & Weijers, 2014, p. 719). These are the types of differences that EI skills training components on Christian college campuses must highlight in order to effectively meet the needs of all Christian college students.

Assume that an international student traveling to the USA for college has proven to be emotionally intelligent among peers of his own culture. Is that fact enough to guarantee that once he arrives at a college in the States he will automatically be emotionally intelligent in his dealings with American, Chinese, Indian or African peers? How a student from the USA responds to stressful scenarios involving those from another culture may be entirely different from that of an international student studying in America. When culturally diverse students are experiencing the tumultuous years of the transition from the teen years of high school to adulthood and college, it is critical that all students understand how to process the emotions of both self and others. In a study conducted at a highly diverse university located in Australia, the researchers determined that merely "socializing, dining, and studying with diverse students does not yield educational benefits, but these benefits instead come from sharing feelings and

problems" (Bowman & Denson, 2011, p. 228). Such a discovery suggests it is essential that college students be trained how to navigate the cultural aspects behind how their diverse classmates recognize, understand and display emotions and feelings. By the same token, Christian college students should be trained in similar skills but with the added focus of the biblical reasoning behind EI.

It is because of the differences among cultures regarding how one experiences or reacts to personal emotions that Huynh, Oakes, and Grossmann (2018) suggested "to understand each perspective requires an appreciation of cultural differences in emotion processes" (p. 4). When cultural identity is understood among diverse college students, the results allow for an understanding of the patterns of behavior that are typically displayed by those within the culture. The benefit of such an understanding, according to Hong (2013), is an "awareness of oneself and others" (p. 114). As a result of selfish desires, history shows that an awareness of self and also a desire to understand others is often neglected. Hitler's hatred for the Jewish race highlighted a time in history when there was great disregard for the feelings of others. Likewise, the historical account of the mistreatment of Africans and African Americans across the United States is another example of neglecting to consider the thoughts and feelings of another people group and cultural identity.

Christian college instructors, as well as their secular counterparts, should strive to understand all students so as to meet as many needs as possible. After all, "knowing who your students are is the starting point for teaching at its best" (Nilson, 2010, p. 3). Nilson (2010) goes on to comment that what students are taught often needs to be grounded in their real-world experiences; in other words, because cultural identity informs beliefs and ideas, college curricula must be planned with regard to cultural differences. To put it another way, Watson and Watson

(2016) found that while more and more students who identify with Hispanic cultures are attending college, fewer than 20% of the typically college-aged students from those cultures report having completed a bachelor's degree. For this reason, college professors should be vigilant about identifying any signs of the possible need for students from the Hispanic cultural identity (and others) to receive added guidance pertinent to their culture regarding degree attainment. Without such cultural-specific knowledge, it may be erroneously assumed by professors of struggling international students that academic failures stem solely from a lack of desire to complete a degree. In a study conducted with ethnic minority students at Christian universities, Ecklund (2013) interviewed a biracial, African American, female student who confessed a feeling that professors often made "assumptions without giving me a chance to prove myself" (p. 177). Understanding the cultural identity represented by every student, and the basic approaches to emotion management of those diverse cultures can mean the difference between a student persisting in the quest for degree attainment and dropping out.

To make a blanket statement that all colleges are wholly lacking an awareness of the growth of diverse student needs would be incorrect. Where college campuses now have increased diversity and a growing consideration for other cultures' practices and desires, as well as students' varying physical abilities, was once a bland, one size fits all offering of collegiate life. Consider for example, the variety of international foods now available in college dining halls, the prevalence of multicultural club offerings, the exceptions permissible for learning and testing, the accommodations available to assist those who cannot use the stairs, and the allowance for practicing one's culturally preferred religious activities regardless of one's school or work schedule. However, the dearth of research present in the literature proves that while some positive changes at higher learning institutions have occurred as a result of increased

student diversity numbers, the changes have yet to include an effort to understand the emotional needs of all college students, and more specifically, Christian college students.

When a student begins to study at a Christian college where many of the students possess a cultural identity different to his or her own, feelings of isolation can occur. Under such a possibility, it would be prudent for American Christian colleges to incorporate EI skills training that will allow students, for example, "to explore the meaning of their ethnic identity at primarily white institutions" (Reyes, 2013, p. 36). Such a move would permit students to learn about themselves and others. Social cognition, the ability to understand others (Koelkebeck, Uwatoko, Tanaka, & Kret, 2017), is similar to "putting yourself in someone else's shoes to understand their beliefs, feelings, experiences and intentions" (McDonald, 2014, para. 10). "Evaluations of school-based programs of emotional learning indicate that it is possible to help individuals to manage their emotions and interact with others more effectively" (Lopes et al., 2011, p. 461). The need for how educators working with Christian college student bodies comprised of diverse cultural identity should consider how to best meet the emotional needs of those students is compelling.

Emotional Intelligence and Behaviors

"College students are a group of individuals who are particularly prone to stress" (Bryant & Malone, 2015, p. 2). While those college students who have accepted Christ as Lord and Savior have the Holy Spirit for help with guidance during emotionally stressful times, the knowledge gleaned in EI skills training courses on college campuses may help all students to better manage and understand emotions and provide an understanding of why one needs to be emotionally intelligent. Machera and Machera (2017) conducted a study with college students which determined that by learning EI skills, the students were able to "enhance human behavior"

(p. 461). Consequently, it stands to reason that Christian college students could be assisted with how to understand and enhance their behavior so as to bring honor, instead of dishonor, to God.

Stress is an inevitable factor of college life and that stress can often lead to undesirable events. Bryant and Malone (2015) posited that a student's level of EI may impact their ability to manage stress at school. Saklofske, Austin, Mastoras, Beaton, and Osborne (2012) suggested that "individuals with high EI have a superior ability to manage their emotions in stressful situations, avoid ruminating on negative events and set future goals effectively" (p. 252). Whether one chooses to completely ignore or to allow any negative emotion free reign, the result may be that the emotions will not be properly managed. Second century Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius is recorded as saying that it is the consequences of anger that are usually more grievous than the causes of it (510 Marcus Aurelius Quotes, 2018). Improperly managed emotions may allow for potentially disastrous behaviors and outcomes.

Statistics show that "a student living in the United States, in comparison to the Scandinavian countries of Finland or Sweden, is thirteen times more likely to be killed in a gun homicide" (Paolini, 2015, p. 1). A simple review of the evidence unearthed as a result of the many school shootings that have occurred in recent years will show how the behaviors resulting from repressed emotions can prove dangerous. It is now known that it was an emotionally troubled young man who committed the Virginia Tech massacre of 2007. The shooter's cultural identity taught "strong male-dominant values are normally transmitted from one generation to the next" (Hong, Cho, & Lee, 2010, p. 564) and as a result of his troubles, he used his dominance to end the lives of many people.

Through the benefit of hindsight, research on the factors behind the perpetrators of the most recent prominent school shootings in the United States show, "a number of them had issues

such as emotional distress and social-anxiety" (Hong, Cho, & Lee, 2010, p. 564). The authors further noted that the shooter in the Virginia Tech massacre was known to suppress, rather than self-manage or regulate his feelings. The evidence against the Virginia Tech shooter parallels the assertion that "the necessary emotional competencies for coping adequately with negative and destructive emotions have not been explicitly taught" (Fernández- Berrocal & Ruiz, 2008, p. 425). Given the negative effects associated with low EI levels, EI skills training should be available at all colleges and more specifically, Christian college leadership should consider ways of explicitly teaching EI skills with a biblical foundation.

While neither the term "emotional intelligence," nor the term "stress" is part of the original translation of the Bible, emotions including stress, anxiety, worry, etc., are indeed discussed. As stated earlier, the Bible provides accounts of negative behaviors and actions that came as a result of people making decisions while succumbing to negative emotions. Similarly, the Bible records the greatest response, or behavior, to the positive emotion of love. Out of His love for His creation, God sent His only Son to die on the cross. Skills training which teaches Christian college students how to properly process all emotions and to commit emotions management to the will of God would mean that students would be provided with life skills that would assist with the decision-making process. Such skills may provide Christian college students with a way to avoid destructive behaviors that can arise from feeling more than thinking.

Different emotions cause different responses and behaviors; "anger, for instance, creates the urge to attack; fear the urge to escape" (Fredrickson, Mancuso, Branigan, & Tugade, 2000, p. 238). Similarly, the emotion of shame can cause one to self-blame, aggression the desire to be overly forceful in pursuits, and annoyance to be impatient with others. It is not only negative

emotions such as fear, shame, aggression and annoyance that can cause undesirable behaviors.

Excitement can lead to expecting disappointment at any moment, hope the possibility of never

abandoning dangerous relationships regardless of the consequences, and being overly

enthusiastic can cause one to make mistakes in haste (Rupande, 2015). Higher levels of EI can

help thwart those potentially negative behaviors, and previous research indicates the need to

design education programs and curricula which focus on student EI skills development since "the

benefits of high EI can lead to success in many areas of life" (Saber, 2016, p. 139).

The very nature of a Christian college means all learning content is presented with a

biblical worldview. As such, it would be fitting for colleges with Christ at the center of their

curricula to purposefully inject biblically sound EI skills training into each program of study. A

well-planned course of study that withholds a knowledge base of how to apply the biblical

approach of EI does the Christian college student body a disservice since the students can be left

without the instruction and tools necessary to please God with the behaviors that can occur as a

result of difficult emotional events. Without realizing it, emotions can be easily mistaken for

reality and it is in those misguided moments that resulting behaviors can wreak havoc.

"How students feel, utilize and respond to their emotions influences the school

environment" (Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2011, p. 99). Students learning to process the stress,

worry, discomfort, anger, fear, joys, and excitement associated with college-level work, large

campuses, diverse roommates, demanding schedules, homesickness, financial strains, new

relationship dynamics, etc., will seek to alleviate that stress in the most convenient ways

possible. Not every convenient form of stress relief is a healthy choice. For some, it will include

behaviors such as eating disorders or excessive exercise, for others, it will be sex; still others will

turn to alcohol, drugs, moodiness or withdrawal. An understanding of EI will provide

ammunition to fight against one's negative default reaction to emotions. An awareness of healthy and productive interventions such as EI skills can assist with stress relief. Should EI learning be injected into Christian college curricula, students will have in their arsenals against potentially negative coping mechanisms the skills to help with choosing more healthy alternatives. The church, and therefore the colleges it supports, "is not only a place to worship, but it is an important social network for encouragement and emotional support" (Esqueda, 2013, p. 36) and can play a significant role in the EI levels of students at Christian colleges.

Emotional Intelligence and Gender

The age-old belief that women must, surely, be more emotionally intelligent than men, since they are often perceived to be the more emotional of the two sexes, continues to be prominent to this day (Grewal & Salovey, 2006). In fact, "per our society, girls are mostly expected to be more expressive of feelings, whereas abstaining from feelings expression in boys is the manly model" (Verma & Dash, 2014, p. 114). In a study of 138 adults, Weisenbach et al. (2014) found men and women use different neural circuitry when processing emotions. Those findings are significant for the diagnoses of "mood and anxiety disorders" (Weisenbach et al., 2014, p. 324). Those findings were significant in this study too, since the study sought to benefit Christian colleges where EI levels based on cultural upbringing and gender are concerned. Because males and females process emotions differently from one another, it may not be enough to design emotional skills training curricula for Christian college student bodies without considering the different emotional management processes that males and females utilize.

A particularly thought-provoking result was generated by a 2017 study of children's television programming. Martin (2017) found that today's children's television shows often have more male characters than female and it is the male characters that tend "to portray more of

all emotions" (p. 499). Furthermore, Martin's (2017) study was designed to test for greater equality where emotions and genders within television shows are concerned and the results indicated, "emotion stereotypes play a role in children's beliefs about the behaviors that are expected and appropriate for their genders" (p. 500). In light of such evidence, EI skills training curricula designers may need to consider the stereotypical behavior ideas that have been learned over the course of a college student's lifetime, not only through cultural identity, but also through the media.

Overall, the research results are fairly mixed where both EI and its domain of self-awareness and gender are concerned. By conducting a study of a mixed group of college students, Waghmare (2015) found, "there is a significant difference between male and female college students on self-awareness" (p. 1118). Parveen (2016) conducted research to determine if male and female college-aged hockey players differed in EI levels and found that male hockey players demonstrated a higher EI level. A research study conducted in Pakistan corroborated the results generated by Parveen's (2016) study when it produced results that revealed, "males have high emotional intelligence as compared to females" (Ahmad, Bangash, & Kahn, 2009, p. 127). Additionally, Singh and Goel (2014) determined that males possess higher EI levels. However, separate studies concluded that women have greater emotional awareness than men (Fernández-Berrocal, Cabello, Castillo, & Extremera, 2012; Garg & Singh, 2016; Hutchison & Gerstein, 2016). This study contributes to the available literature by providing insight into the difference between male and female Christian college students' EI.

Emotional Intelligence Beyond the College Classroom

"The core purpose of education, unquestionably, is human development" (Kauts, 2016, p. 149). In that case, it would stand to reason that whether or not a person is adequately prepared

for life beyond the college classroom should be one focus of any college education.

Furthermore, the knowledge and values that a student needs in order to bring glory to God in

future employment should be one focus of a Christian college education. The expectation that all

colleges should seek to provide cognitive academic proficiency where core content is concerned

is obvious. However, in spite of the research which has proven that a career ready student

requires more than "book learning" (Aziz & Pangil, 2017; Machera & Machera, 2017), a

proficiency in endeavors known as "soft-skills," such as cultural awareness and EI, are not yet

explicitly taught in every college program of study. "College ready is too often associated only

with academic skills, which is just one component of career readiness" (Phang, 2014, para. 4).

"The world has changed, and the educational experience has not kept pace with the

demands" (Phang, 2014, para. 1). The curricula designed for college campuses should seek to

provide students with material that will prove useful not just to pass the required number of

classes prescribed for degree attainment, but also to help students achieve success in their chosen

careers. "The new realities of the business arena ask for culturally attuned and emotionally

sensitive global leaders who can react to the challenges of the particular foreign environments of

various countries and complex interpersonal work situations" (VanderPal, 2014, p. 137). Such a

shift in the realities of the business world places a new burden on colleges to redefine what they

consider career readiness.

Career readiness. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)

defines career readiness as "the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that

broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace" (Career

Readiness, 2018, para. 3). It is noteworthy that the NACE (2018) goes on to state that college

graduates must possess those skills such as are required for contributing to healthy

collaborations, the ability to appreciate, understand and work with cultural diversity, respecting the values of different genders, and an ability to assess and manage emotions. "Foundational knowledge and skills that pertain to college success and employment competence overlap substantially" (Malin, Bragg, & Hackman, 2017, p. 812). That is to say, colleges should be careful to provide that knowledge and those skills so that the students pursuing educations there can be afforded those successes in both areas. Among the most notable of the necessary knowledge and skills that pertain to success in college and career readiness (CCR) is self-efficacy. College student self-efficacy, in other words, "a person's belief in one's capabilities" (Artino, 2012, p. 76) to achieve a goal, can be positively achieved through the teaching of EI skills. As a result, "it is recommended to teach emotional intelligence skills to students" (Gharetepeh, Safari, Pashaei, Razahei, & Bagher Kajbaf, 2015, p. 50).

Job postings. Observed as a valid predictor of desired workplace goals (Whitman, Kraus, & Van Rooy, 2014; Aziz & Pangil, 2017; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013), EI is an ever-growing facet in the pursuit of desirable employees. Today's modern human resource protocols often include the use of specific language in job postings that points to the need for high levels of EI in order to be qualified for certain jobs, and the use of EI tests as part of the hiring process (Recro Pharma, 2017; Whitman, Kraus, & Van Rooy, 2014). As to how it relates to today's workforce, it is important to note that "in recent years, significant changes in the composition of the workplace mean that individuals will work in teams from diverse cultural backgrounds" (Lloyd & Hartel, 2010, p. 845). Institutions of higher learning should consider the role that diversity will play in the future workforce of their students and apply that knowledge to curriculum development decisions since EI skills assist in the successful collaboration among diverse individuals (Frederickson, Petrides, & Simmonds, 2012; Sato & Hodge, 2015).

Employability is the "capability of getting a job" (Paadi, 2014, p. 130) but goes beyond the idea of one's ability to obtain a job because it also refers to the ability to maintain a job. According to the University of Edinburgh, teaching employability is the responsibility of higher education institutions and is "more important now than ever before in light of the world graduates are entering" (What is employability, 2016, para. 4). Among the many reasons that could be attributed to a person's failure to attain or retain a job is the absence of EI skills. As a result of an increase in the attention provided to employability of late, one's level of EI as it relates to "career self-management, career resilience, adaptability, proactivity, optimism, self-efficacy and sociability are increasingly receiving attention" (Potgieter & Coetzee, 2017, p.188).

EI on the job is important since challenges abound in all areas and on all levels of the workforce. From corporate leaders to the least senior member of every company, all are at risk of facing new challenges as a result of having coworkers from diverse cultures; additionally, every employee must learn to navigate other challenging factors such as "politics, peer pressure, competition, security, and work-life balance" (Yedavalli, 2014, para. 3). Yedavalli (2014), an employee of the large network for maintaining one's professional identity known as LinkedIn states, "at the core of any business transaction, the content is only 7% and the balance is all about emotions" (para. 10).

In response to the results found in recent research that emotions have a large presence on the job, how are companies applying that knowledge to the hiring process? Because EI has proven valid for predicting organizational outcomes such as job performance, teamwork, and leadership, and has proven to be helpful in the fight against stress experienced at work (Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013; Whitman, Kraus, & Van Rooy, 2014; Kauts, 2016), the idea of specifically targeting individuals who possess high levels of EI is explicitly written into many modern-day

job postings. Take for example the job posting of Recro Pharmaceuticals (2017) in the search

for a Vice President of Hospital and Acute Care Sales. Specific characteristics related to EI to be

possessed by qualified candidates were detailed in the posting as "exceptional leadership skills,

high emotional intelligence, the ability to adjust to work environment changes, decision making

skills and the ability to engender trust and foster collaboration" (Recro Pharmaceuticals, 2017).

"The world's #1 job site, Indeed.com (2018), helps companies of all sizes hire the best

talent" (para. 1). A search on the Indeed website returned a list of more than four thousand job

descriptions available to those candidates that possess EI. Additionally, a simple Google search

using the terms "job postings with emotional intelligence" lead to the Ziprecruiter.com website

where more than ten thousand available jobs were posted which specifically used the term

"emotional intelligence" in available job postings (Ziprecruiter, 2018). Finally, a website for

available church ministry related jobs, Churchstaffing.com (2018), listed positions such as

administrative, executive and student pastors, missions leaders and communication directors, that

all require the specific skill of EI. With thousands of secular and ministry related jobs in the

United States alone touting the need for the workforce of today to be in possession of EI skills,

the need for the teaching of EI at America's colleges, including Christian colleges, is paramount.

Summary

"Researchers have repeatedly confirmed that teachers need to know more about the world

of the [students] with whom they work, in order to better offer opportunities for learning

success" (Hill, 2012, p. 7). Besides providing an understanding of the need for teaching EI, the

purpose of this study is to better understand the differences in Christian college students' EI

based on cultural identity. The study also investigated differences in both male and female

Christian college students' EI based on cultural identity. By gaining insight into how a Christian

college student's EI is affected by cultural identity and gender, educators at Christian higher learning institutions can better design and develop strategies to meet the emotional needs of all students, as well as interventions to promote EI specifically based on cultural norms. Meeting the emotional needs of college students will, as the literature has indicated, assist with the educational and professional goals of college students in the United States. As this study utilized participants at twenty-nine Christian colleges, the findings could help Christian educators better design and develop similar strategies and interventions through a biblical lens.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

A growing topic among education researchers is emotional intelligence (EI). "EI accounts for the variance in human behavior that cannot be explained by an individual's cognitive abilities" (Eikenberry, 2016, p. 24). In an effort to examine what effect, if any, that cultural identity and gender had on the EI levels of Christian college students, a quantitative causal-comparative research design was utilized in this study. The design, participants, setting, instrumentation, procedures and data analyses that addressed the research question and the corresponding null hypotheses will be detailed in this chapter.

Design

The research design for this ex-post facto quantitative study was causal-comparative. A causal-comparative design was the best choice for this proposed study since it is "a type of quantitative investigation that seeks to discover possible causes and effects of a personal characteristic by comparing individuals in whom it is present with individuals in whom it is present to a lesser degree" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 634). In this study, the personal characteristic of students' cultural identity and gender were the independent variables and the dependent variable was student EI level. The ex-post facto portion of the design applied to the effects (cultural identity and gender) which are conditions that already existed among the participants. The purpose of this research design was to investigate a possible cause-effect relationship existing between the EI levels of the participants, and their cultural identity and gender.

Research Question

RQ: Is there a difference between the emotional intelligence levels of male Christian college students, female Christian college students, and both male and female Christian college students based on cultural identity?

Hypotheses

$H_0 1$: There is no statistically significant difference in Christian college students' emotional intelligence levels, as measured by the TEIQue-SF, based on their cultural identity (low and moderate).

$H_0 2$: There is no statistically significant difference in Christian college students' emotional intelligence levels as measured by the TEIQue-SF, based on their gender (male and female).

$H_0 3$: There is no statistically significant difference in male and female Christian college students' emotional intelligence levels, as measured by the TEIQue-SF, based on their cultural identity (low and moderate).

Participants and Setting

The population for this study was drawn from a convenience sample of approximately 50,000 college students at 29 Christian colleges in the United States. The 29 participating schools were located in sixteen different states (AR, AZ, CO, FL, GA, IL, KS, MO, NC, NY, OH, OR, PA, SC, TN, TX). One school sent the invitation to students at campuses in two of the sixteen states. While a variety of denominations were represented by the schools, there were no parochial schools included in the sample.

Both residential and commuter students were included in this study. Residential students are defined as students living in university owned/operated housing located on campus while taking on campus courses and commuter students are defined as those students not living in

university owned/operated housing located on campus while taking on campus courses (Jacoby & Girrell, 1981). "Online-only students can feel more disconnected from peers" (Otter et al., 2013, p. 34), thus, the decision was made to not include the online-only student population in this study.

The desired sample size for this study was n = 30-50 students per cultural identity grouping which was achieved with African American (n = 41), Caucasian (n = 44), Hispanic (n = 39), and Mixed Identities (n = 44). A minimum sample size for causal-comparative research designs is 30 participants per group (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2015; Rovai, Baker & Ponton, 2013). Additionally, Warner (2013) considers n > 30 per group to be "reasonably large" (p. 163). The four groups totaled N = 168 which exceeded the minimum sample requirement of N = 128 based on a medium effect size of .25, a power of .8 and an alpha of .05 (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). It was the number of available voluntary participants that determined how many groups were ultimately included in this study. Residential/commuter undergraduates at each school were contacted, via email, regarding voluntary participation in this study. As this study was limited to the undergraduate student population, no graduate students were included in the invitation.

As explained in chapter two, God's design for mankind, regardless of origin, culture, or race, includes the ability to experience emotions. That being said, not all people experience emotions in identical fashions; often emotions can be mishandled, and the end result can be a debasement of God's ideal design of emotions management. Further, due to the diverse nature of today's higher learning institutions, multiple attitudes towards emotions can be at play in the learning processes, classrooms, dorm rooms and social activities. Given the variety of cultures on college campuses in America today, coupled with the number of potential attitudes towards

emotions and the part they play in everyday life, colleges should seek to understand how all students respond to emotions. Lloyd and Hartel (2010) found that EI could assist with ensuring "more realistic and less judgmental reactions" (p. 847) to the behaviors of those from other cultural identities or backgrounds.

The terms cultural identity or culture, rather than race, were desirable for this study since a person's race may not clearly indicate the way a person was brought up, and therefore may not speak to how a person will naturally respond to emotions. For example, a Filipino family who has never lived in Philippines, has only lived in the United States, and has only espoused the ideals, beliefs, attitudes and customs of the States, would most identify the American/Caucasian culture as their own. Similarly, an orphaned Ethiopian infant who is adopted by a family from France and who has no access to any part of an authentic Ethiopian culture would then be able to claim a French cultural identity based on the way he or she was reared. In both cases, the persons were of one *race*, yet were raised with the values and practices of another cultural identity. Research has indicated that "in general, naming a nation is helpful" (Publication Manual, 2010, p. 75) when determining the name for a cultural identity group. This study's surveys asked the participants to signify their cultural identification through the names of nations, when possible. Again, the cultural identity groups used in this study were comprised of the top four groups that had sufficient voluntary participants to meet the necessary minimum number of 30 participants per group.

By inviting only students over the age of seventeen, this study did not require parental consent forms in order for the students to participate. Although the minimum sample participant age in order to be considered for this study was 18 years, a maximum age cap was not set since the study was open to all undergraduate, residential/commuter students over the age of 17

enrolled at the approved colleges at the time of the email invitation. The invitation was sent to said students regardless of whether they were enrolled on a full-time or part-time basis. While the residential/commuter students may have been taking an online course at the time of the invitation, this study was not open to those students enrolled as "online only" students at the 29 participating colleges and universities located around the USA.

Instrumentation

Two instruments were used in this study: a test of trait EI and a survey to determine cultural identity. To measure EI, the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Short Form (TEIQue-SF) was used in this study (Appendix A). Permission to access and use the TEIQue-SF instrument was not necessary since the author allows free usage for strictly research purposes (Petrides, 2018, para. 2). Similarly, the instrument to measure participant cultural identity and gender, the MEIM instrument (Appendix B) states, "no written permission is required for use of the measure" (Phinney, 1992, para. 8). In exchange for usage of the instruments, both Petrides and Phinney ask for copies of the results of any studies that utilize their measures.

Originally developed in London, "the TEIQue-SF is a self-report inventory that covers the sampling domain of trait EI comprehensively and comprises 30 items, measuring 15 distinct facets, four factors, and global trait EI" (Petrides, 2009, p. 5). The TEIQue-SF was originally designed in 2001 as part of an unpublished dissertation and the available variations of TEIQue-SF have since become "the most widely used measures of trait EI" (Stamatapoulou, Galanis, Tzarella, Petrides, & Prezerakos, 2017, p. 1). Petrides (2003) stated the form is reliable for assessing educational context for emotionally related individual differences. The TEIQue-SF has been previously used in numerous studies (Kise, 2014; Ringling, 2015; Andrei, Siegling, Aloe,

Baldaro, & Petrides, 2016) and its reliability has been determined to be very good at 0.92

(Hertwig, 2016) and the internal consistency good at 0.83 (Laborde, Allen, & Guillen, 2016).

A 7-point Likert-type scale is utilized to measure the form's 30 items, ranging from 1

(*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). On the form, participant EI is explored through

questions such as "Expressing my emotions with words is not a problem for me" (Petrides,

2009). The TEIQue-SF was designed so that all of the 30 facets are covered by one of four

factors. Besides a well-being factor, the survey covers trait happiness, trait optimism and self-

esteem. Self-control includes emotion regulation, impulsiveness, and stress management. Trait

empathy, emotion perception, emotion expression, and relationships fall under the emotionality

factor. Finally, the sociability factor encompasses social awareness, assertiveness and emotion

management.

 The use of the TEIQue-SF was ideal for this study since the four factors encompass the

three central domains of EI used in this study: self-awareness, self-management, social

awareness (Goleman, 1998). While the TEIQue-SF has been translated into almost thirty

different languages, only the English version was utilized in this study. The highest possible

score on the scale is 1071 and the lowest score is 153.

It was also necessary for this study to determine the cultural identity of each of the

voluntary participants. Simply determining where a student lives is no longer sufficient since "in

this country, people come from a lot of different cultures, backgrounds, and ethnic groups"

(Phinney, 1992, para. 1). It was Phinney's (1992) Multigroup Ethnic Identity measure (MEIM)

that utilized language that very closely ties to the terms "culture" and "cultural identity," and for

that reason the MEIM was utilized in this study. Additionally, the MEIM was an excellent

resource for this study since it was originally designed for young adults (Phinney, 1992) and

many of the study's participants fell into that category. The measure has been used in multiple studies, and statistically speaking, the measure typically produces alphas above .80 across a wide range of ethnic identity groups (Phinney, 1992; Schwartz et al., 2011; Blozis & Villareal, 2014).

While the MEIM is available in two foreign languages, the instrument's designer states that no reliability information is yet available for either of those versions. As a result, only the English version was utilized in this study. Using a 4-point Likert-type scale, the measure asked participants to rate themselves on 15 statements such as "I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions and customs" (Phinney, 1992). The range for the scale includes 4 (*strongly disagree*), 3 (dis*agree*), 2 (*agree*) and 1 (st*rongly agree*). The highest score possible on the MEIM is 60; the lowest possible score is 15. A researcher created demographic question was used to collect data on the second independent variable, gender.

Procedures

While seeking IRB approval to conduct this research study, the researcher reached out to more than 170 Christian colleges across the United States. The college representative for IRB related topics at each college was contacted regarding permission to conduct the study among their residential/commuter, undergraduate student bodies. After the institutions granted permission and the researcher's IRB approval (Appendix C) to conduct the research was given, 28 of the participating Christian higher learning institutions sent an invitation to their qualifying student body members on behalf of the researcher. One institution provided a list of student email addresses and the researcher sent an email invitation to each student on the list. So as to protect the names of the students listed, the email containing the list of email addresses, as well as the emails that were sent, were deleted from the researcher's outbox.

In the email sent to the students (Appendix D) at the 29 institutions, a brief invitation to participate along with an IRB approved Consent Form (Appendix E) was included that indicated: the name of the study, name of researcher, purpose of the study, procedures, risks, benefits, confidentiality commitment, payment explanation, participation explanation and directions for how to contact the researcher in the event of any questions. Students interested in participating in the study were advised that they would signal their consent to participate by clicking on the survey links and completing both surveys.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the participants at the Christian colleges on the TEIQue-SF and MEIM were kept safe and confidential. To analyze the data of this quantitative, causal comparative (ex-post facto) study, a two-way between group analysis of variance (ANOVA) was appropriate because it was necessary "to compare means on a quantitative y outcome variable across more than two groups" (Warner, 2013, p. 219).

To analyze the data pertaining to the research question, whether or not there exists a difference in Christian college student EI level based on cultural identity and gender, a two-way ANOVA was the most appropriate choice for this study since two independent variables were investigated. "When the groups have been classified on several independent variables called factors, the ANOVA procedure can be used to determine whether each factor and the interactions between the factors, have a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 632). The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to run the data analyses and to determine whether the null hypotheses were rejected.

Because this study's research question and hypotheses were designed to determine if the EI levels of the Christian college students (overall and divided by gender) differed across the

cultural identities represented at the colleges, a two-way ANOVA was ideal since Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) stated that ANOVA "allows researchers to compare subgroups, such as gender" (p. 320).

Prior to running a two-way ANOVA on the data of this study of EI level based on cultural identity and gender, certain assumptions had to prove tenable (Warner, 2013). First, no significant or extreme outliers existed in the groups of independent variables in terms of the dependent variable. Second, the dependent variable was approximately normally distributed for each group of the independent variable. Third, the population variances of the dependent variable were equal for all groups of the independent variable. Chapter four discusses the specific details/outcomes of the three assumptions pertaining to this study's two-way ANOVA analysis.

The effect size for this study was $n^2 = .25$. Per Cohen (1988), an $n^2 = .25$ effect size is considered medium (Warner, 2013, p. 208). Further, Warner (2013) stated an alpha level of .05 is "conventional" (p. 208) and was utilized in this study. Chapter four includes the following: assumption testing, statistics (*M, SD*), number (N), number per cell (*n*), degree of freedom (df within/df between), observed F value (*F*), significance level (*p*), effect size, and power (Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2013).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This study sought to address the gap in literature regarding the effect of cultural identity and gender on the emotional intelligence (EI) levels of Christian college students studying in the United States. This chapter reviews the research questions and hypotheses that guided the data collection and analysis. Within this chapter, the demographics of the sample are discussed and the descriptive statistics for each variable examined is presented. Additionally, the results of the data analyses are presented and discussed. The chapter ends with a summary.

Research Questions

The primary research question for the study was**:**

RQ: Is there a difference between the emotional intelligence levels of male Christian college students, female Christian college students, and both male and female Christian college students based on cultural identity?

Null Hypotheses

The corresponding null hypotheses include:

H$_0$1: There is no statistically significant difference in Christian college students' emotional intelligence levels, as measured by the TEIQue-SF, based on their cultural identity (low and moderate).

H$_0$2: There is no statistically significant difference in Christian college students' emotional intelligence levels as measured by the TEIQue-SF, based on their gender (male and female).

H_03: There is no statistically significant difference in male and female Christian college students' emotional intelligence levels, as measured by the TEIQue-SF, based on their cultural identity (low and moderate).

Data Collection and Sample Demographics

Once approval to conduct the study at the institutions was received, a request to distribute an invitation and a link to the two surveys to undergraduate, residential/commuter students enrolled in the institution was sent to the twenty-nine approved Christian colleges/universities located around the United States. Per the U.S. Census Bureau (Census Regions and Divisions, 2019), the country's four main divisions are Northeast, Midwest, South and West. Of the 29 schools where approval to conduct the study was granted, three were located in the Northeast (10.3%), six in the Midwest (20.6%), seventeen in the South (58.6%), and four in the West (13.7%). Three of the 29 Christian higher learning institutions approved for this study were Historically Black Colleges, and their enrollment numbers totaled just under 3,000 students. The 29 institutions varied greatly in student enrollment with the smallest college having fewer than 400 students and the largest university having more than 5000.

Each institution's administration determined how and to which undergraduate, residential/commuter students the survey invitation was distributed. Some institutions sent the invitation to a small number of students within specific courses. At other institutions, the invitation to participate in the study was sent to all undergraduate, residential/commuter students. In this study, the smallest student grouping to receive the invitation to participate was 150 students and the largest was more than 5000.

While more than 1800 surveys were completed by students across the twenty-nine institutions, not all 1800 surveys were utilized in this study for three main reasons. First, there

were some students who completed only one of the two necessary surveys. Second, the total

number of the surveys received included more than sixty different cultural identity groups, but

only four of those groups achieved the minimum number of thirty participants required for a

causal-comparative design. Third, because a vastly unequal number of surveys across the four

largest cultural identity groups were received, an effort was made to keep participant totals

across all four groups relatively equal in number. Data from each cultural identity group was

collected from the survey responses in the order in which they were received. One hundred and

sixty-eight students' data were originally analyzed for this study. A majority of the study's

participants were female (70.2%, $n = 118$); males accounted for only 29.8% of the participants (n

$= 50$). The sample consisted of African American students (24.4%, $n = 41$), Caucasian students

(26.2%, $n = 44$), Hispanic students (23.2%, $n = 39$) and Mixed Cultural Identity students (26.2%,

$n = 44$).

Descriptive Statistics

All participants completed surveys consisting of demographic questions including the

Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Short Form (TEIQue-SF), and the Multigroup

Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM). The TEIQue-SF was used to collect data about the college

students' EI which served as the dependent variable. The MEIM was used to collect data about

the students' cultural identity which served as one of the independent variables. A researcher

created demographic question was used to collect data on the second independent variable,

gender.

The TEIQue-SF utilizes a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to

7 (*strongly agree*). On the TEIQue-SF, scores are summed for each item in the scale. The

higher the score, the higher the EI level of the participant. On the TEIQue-SF, the lowest

possible score is 153 and the highest, 1071. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to assess the reliability, "the consistency of measurement of results" (Warner, 2013, p. 905), of the instruments. Per George and Mallery (2010), $\alpha = > .80$ indicates good reliability. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the TEIQue-SF was .822, indicating good internal consistency.

The MEIM utilizes a 4-point Likert-type scale which ranges from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). The lowest possible score is 15 and the highest score is 60. Raw scores were calculated and used to categorize students as having high (46-60), moderate (31-45), or low (15-30) cultural identity. The MEIM scale for the current participants had a high level of internal consistency, as determined by a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .881.

A researcher created demographic question *What is your gender?* was used to collect data on the second independent variable, gender. Students could choose from two options: male or female. For analysis purposes, the gender variable was dummy coded; females were coded as 0 and males were coded as 1.

Because a minimum sample size for causal-comparative research designs is thirty participants per group (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2015), participants categorized as having a high level of cultural identity (high = 46-60) were not included in the analysis given the small number ($n = 7$). Once the seven participants of the high cultural identity category, the four outliers and the one extreme outlier were removed, a total of 156 cases were ultimately included in the analysis. The descriptive statistics for EI disaggregated by the cultural identity groups and gender for the 156 participants included in the analysis are found in Table 1.

Table 1

Gender	Cultural Identity	Mean	SD	n
Descriptive Statistics				
Female	Low	128.6727	8.45917	55
	Moderate	126.6727	8.17869	55
	Total	127.6727	8.34256	110
Male	Low	126.8846	10.33567	26
	Moderate	120.0500	8.04903	20
	Total	123.9130	9.92153	46
Total	Low	128.0988	9.07690	81
	Moderate	124.9067	8.61045	75
	Total	126.5641	8.97105	156

Results

The research question addressed by this study was: Is there a difference between the emotional intelligence levels of male Christian college students, female Christian college students, and both male and female Christian college students based on cultural identity? Per Warner (2013), a two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), is appropriate when a researcher seeks to analyze the effect of two independent variables on a dependent variable measured on an interval or ratio level. In this study, the dependent variable, EI level of Christian college students, was measured by the participants' score on the TEIQue-SF, ranging from 153-1071. Additionally, there were two independent variables of interest. The first independent variable of this study, cultural identity, was measured by the MEIM survey to provide three ordinal

categories of low (15-30), moderate (31-45), and high (46-60) cultural identity. Gender, with two nominal categories (male or female), was the second independent variable.

Assumption Testing

Three assumptions were examined prior to running the two-way ANOVA. First, the assumption that there were no significant or extreme outliers present in the data was examined. Boxplots were used to examine if outliers existed. Inspection of the boxplots indicated that there was one extreme outlier and four outliers (see Figures 1 and 2). ANOVAS are sensitive to outliers; in other words, outliers can affect ANOVA results. Per Warner (2013), the two-way ANOVA was run both with and without the outliers "to determine if the inclusion of an outlier would make a difference in the outcome of the statistical analysis" (p. 156).

The results of the two analyses were different demonstrating that the unusual data points of the five outliers affected the results. The results without the outliers were statistically significant ($p = .004$, $p = .007$); the results with the outliers were not significant. Additionally, because the confidence intervals were appreciably different, the presence of the outliers significantly affected the results and needed to be addressed (Warner, 2013). All five outlier cases were inspected; in every case, the participants responded to all survey questions using the same rating (e.g., all 4s or all 5s). Given the lack of variation in the survey question responses, it is possible that data entry errors were present. Because most individuals have some variance in their item ratings, the ratings were viewed as slightly suspect. Because the potential of data error existed, the outliers were removed to ensure those cases did not have undue influence on the generalization of the results. Consequently, the decision was made to remove all four outliers (cases 27, 50, 83, and 147) and the one extreme outlier (case 141).

Figure 1
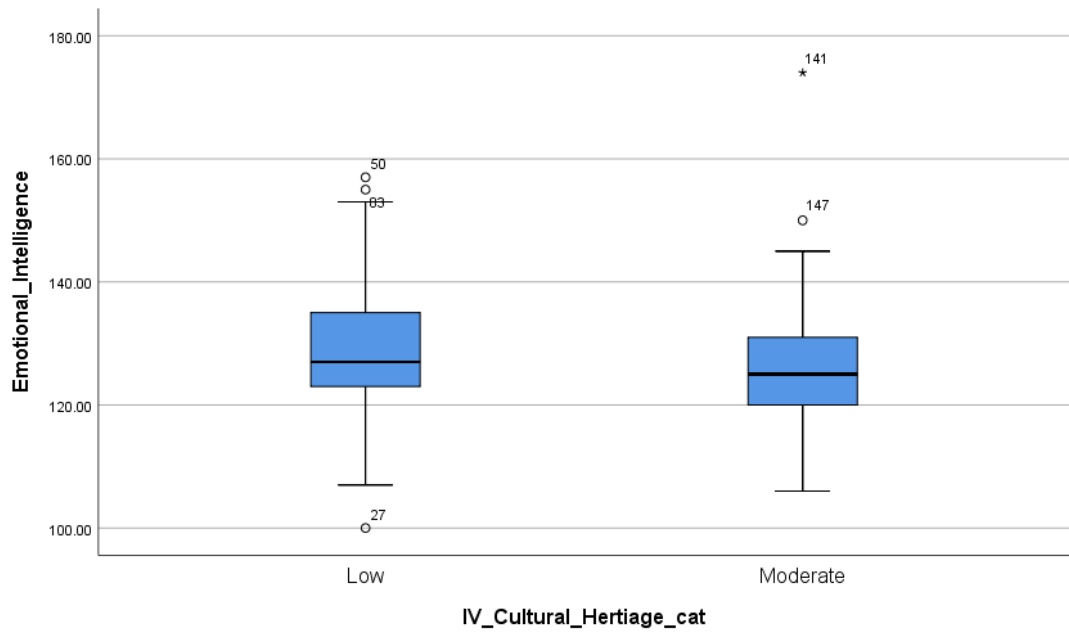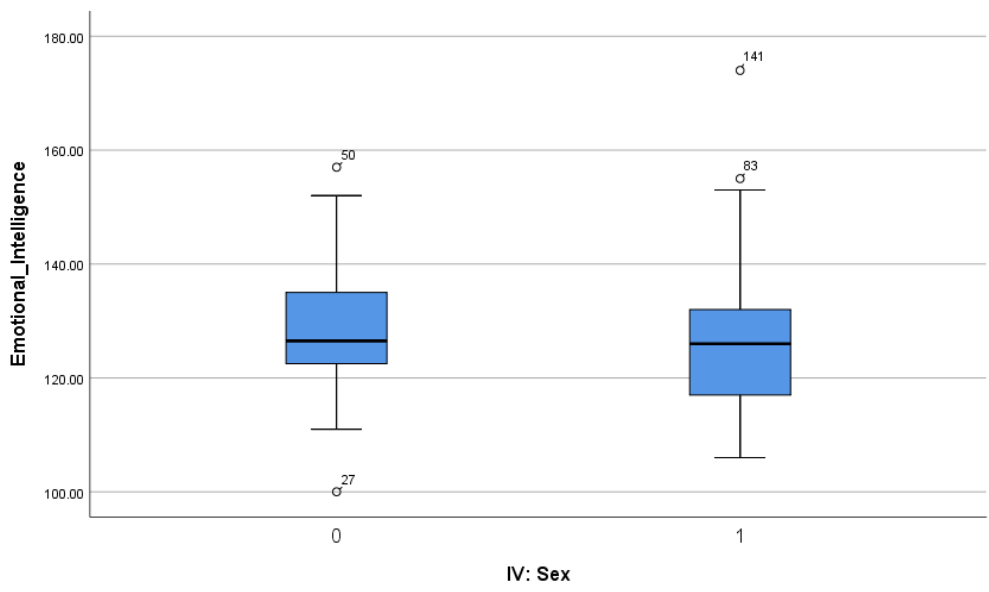
Box Plot Cultural Identity

Figure 2

Box Plot Gender

The second assumption tested was the assumption of normality. The dependent variable

should be approximately normally distributed for each group of the independent variable since

the two-way ANOVA assumes that the population distributions are normal. The assumption of normality was evaluated by conducting Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests since each group had over 50 participants (Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2013). For normality tests, non-significant results (a *p*-value greater than .05), indicates tenability of the assumption. In other words, a *p*-value over .05 indicates that normality can be assumed. Findings in this study demonstrated that the assumption of normality was not tenable since the *p*-value for all groups except for the moderate cultural identity group, were below .05 (see Table 2). Although not tenable in this study, two-way ANOVA analyses are robust over moderate violations of this assumption"(Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2013).

Table 2

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test Results

	Komolgorov-Smironov		
	Statistic	*df*	*p*
Low Cultural Identity	.109	84	.015
Moderate Cultural Identity	.095	77	.080
Females	.085	112	.047
Males	.127	49	.045

The final assumption was the homogeneity of variances. The two-way ANOVA assumes that the population variances of the dependent variable are equal for all groups of the independent variable. If the variances are unequal, the Type I error rate can be affected. In this study, the sample population variance for EI was equal as evidenced by the results of the Levene's test of equality of variance. The assumption of variances was tested and found tenable $F(3, 152) = .305, p = .822$.

A two-way ANOVA was then used to examine the main effect of cultural identity. There was a statistically significant difference in mean EI scores for students with low and moderate levels of cultural identity $F(1, 152) = 8.353$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = .052$. Examination of the descriptive statistics (see Table 1) provides evidence that students with low levels of cultural identity had higher levels of EI than students with moderate cultural identity. Thus, this study's first null hypothesis: there is no statistically significant difference in Christian college students' emotional intelligence levels based on their cultural identity (low, moderate) as measured by the TEIQue-SF, was rejected.

A two-way ANOVA was used to examine the second main effect, that of gender on EI level. The second null hypothesis: there is no statistically significant difference in Christian college students' emotional intelligence levels based on their gender (male, female) was also rejected. There was a statistically significant difference in mean emotional intelligence scores for males and females, $F(1, 152) = 7.571$, $p = .007$, $\eta^2 = .047$. Women had higher EI than men (see Table 3). The effect sizes for males and females ($\eta^2 = .052$; $\eta^2 = .047$) were moderate per Cohen's (1969) conventions for partial eta squared values.

The results of the two-way ANOVA also demonstrated that there was not a significant interaction effect between cultural identity and gender on EI $F(1,152) = 2.502$, $p = .116$, $\eta^2 = .0116$. Consequently, there was no evidence to reject the third null hypothesis: there is no statistically significant difference in Christian college students' emotional intelligence levels based on cultural identity (low, moderate) and gender (male, female). As there was not a statistically significant interaction effect, the effect of cultural identity on EI is the same for males and females.

Table 3

Dependent Variable: Emotional Intelligence - Test of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	1096.537[a]	3	365.512	4.883	.003	.088	14.649	.902
Intercept	2021108.875	1	2021108.875	27000.646	.000	.994	27000.646	1.000
IVSex	566.730	1	566.730	7.571	.007	.047	7.571	.781
IV_Cultural	625.278	1	625.278	8.353	.004	.052	8.353	.819
IVGender * IV_Cultural_ [Interaction)	187.250	1	187.250	2.502	.116	.016	2.502	.349
Error	11377.822	152	74.854					
Total	2511356.000	156						
Corrected Total	12474.359	155						

a. R Squared = .088 (Adjusted R Squared = .070)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Conclusion

Table 4

Results Summary

Hypothesis	Analysis & Result	Conclusion	Decision about null hypothesis
H₀1: There is no statistically significant difference in Christian college students' EI levels based on their cultural identity (low, moderate) as measured by the TEIQue-SF.	Two-way ANOVA, main effect, $F(1, 152)$ = 8.353, p = .004, η^2 = .052	Students with low levels of cultural identity had higher levels of EI than students with moderate cultural identity	Reject

H₀2: There is no statistically significant difference in Christian college students' EI levels based on their gender (male, female)	Two-way ANOVA, main effect, $F(1, 152) = 7.571$, $p = .007$, $\eta^2 = .047$	There was a statistically significant difference in mean emotional intelligence scores for males and females.	Reject
H₀3: There is no statistically significant difference in Christian college students' EI levels based on cultural identity (low, moderate and gender (male, female).	Two-way ANOVA, interaction effect, $F(1,152) = 2.502$, $p = .116$, $\eta^2 = .0116$	There was not a significant interaction effect between cultural identity and gender on EI	Fail to reject

In chapter five, a summary of the results of this causal-comparative study of the effect of cultural identity and gender on Christian college student EI levels, implications of the study, limitations of the study and finally, recommendations for future research with similar variables will be provided.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

This concluding chapter will first review the purpose of this research study and will provide an in-depth discussion of each part of the research question by comparing and contrasting the findings of this research study with the findings presented in the existing literature review of Chapter Two. Additionally, implications associated with this study, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research studies will be presented.

Discussion

This study was borne from the two-part problem that, to date, little if any research has been conducted to examine the effect of cultural identity on the emotional intelligence (EI) levels of students attending Christian higher learning institutions located in the USA and only a few studies have examined EI levels of Christian college students in America. As a result of that problem statement, it was established that the purpose of this quantitative, causal-comparative research study was to examine the effect of cultural identity and gender on the EI levels among students enrolled in America's Christian colleges and universities. "Is there a difference between the emotional intelligence levels among male Christian college students, female Christian college students and both male and female Christian college students based on cultural identity?" was the research question posed in this study. An examination of these topics was relevant and timely, given the increase of minority students at America's Christian colleges and this study's results add to the existing literature concerning Christian college students and EI. Undergraduate, residential/commuter students with a minimum age of 18 at 29 Christian institutions around the USA (N = 168) completed the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Short Form

(TEIQue-SF) to determine their EI levels and the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) to determine their level of cultural identity and their gender.

Emotional Intelligence and Cultural Identity

The first null hypothesis of this study stated, there is no statistically significant difference in Christian college students' emotional intelligence levels, as measured by the TEIQue-SF, based on their cultural identity (low and moderate). Only seven of the 168 participant surveys utilized in this study fell into the high cultural identity category (46-60) on the MEIM. As noted earlier, those seven scores were removed from the analysis and only the numbers for the low (15-30) and moderate groups (31-45) were used. There was a statistically significant difference in mean emotional intelligence scores for cultural identity $F(1,152) = 8.353$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = .052$. The null hypothesis was rejected since those participants in the low (15-30) cultural identity category had higher levels of EI than those in the moderate (31-45) category. A possible reason for the variance of EI between the low and moderate cultural identity groups is that those who more stringently identify with their culture groups may be less open to learning and experiencing ideas from those with whom they differ. Similarly, those in the lower cultural identity group may be more willing to fit into their new culture and therefore, may be able to achieve more emotionally intelligent behavior.

Emotional Intelligence and Gender

Weisenbach et al. (2014) found that men and women vary in their neural manners of emotion processing. This difference between the male and female bodies' approaches to emotions indicates the need to investigate the difference in EI levels of males and females in Christian colleges. This study's second null hypothesis stated there is no statistically significant

difference in Christian college students' emotional intelligence levels, as measured by the TEIQue-SF, based on their gender and was rejected.

Analysis for this hypothesis examined the difference in EI levels between male and female participants. Results indicated a statistically significant difference in mean EI scores for males and females, $F(1, 152) = 7.571$. $p = .007$, $\eta^2 = .047$. The females had higher EI levels than the males. As a whole, the results from studies investigating differences in EI levels based on gender are mixed. The belief that males should abstain from showing emotions continues to this day (Verma & Dash, 2014), however several studies have determined that a statistically significant difference between male and female EI exists and that the difference is often in favor of males having higher EI levels (Waghmare, 2015; Parveen, 2016; Ahmad, Bangash, & Kahn, 2009; Singh & Goel, 2014). This study's results are in contrast to that finding. However, this study's results affirm the findings of many previous studies which noted that it is females which possess higher levels of EI than males (Fernandez-Berrocal, Cabello, Castillo, & Extremera, 2012; Garg & Singh, 2016; Hutchison & Gerstein, 2016). Likewise, this study's findings support results from previous research studies which found that females are often taught from a young age to be more expressive emotionally and that less emphasis is placed on emotions when raising males (Naghavi & Redzuan, 2011).

Emotional Intelligence, Cultural Identity, and Gender

As previously noted, while studies regarding college student EI levels and gender exist, few studies approach the concern that one's cultural identity contributes to college student emotional well-being. From the literature review came research studies which proposed a need for studies to address EI from a perspective of diversity (Tombs, Russell-Bennet, & Ashkanasy,

2014; Watson & Watson, 2016; Behjat & Chowdhury, 2012; Tompkins, Galbraith, & Bas, 2011; Daryani, Aali, Amini, & Shareghi, 2017).

Cultural identity was the first of this study's two independent variables. The second independent variable was gender. The final of this study's three null hypotheses considered the interaction of both independent variables and stated there is no statistically significant difference in male and female Christian college students' emotional intelligence levels, as measured by the TEIQue-SF, based on their cultural identity (low and moderate). The results of this study's two-way ANOVA demonstrated that there was not a significant interaction effect of cultural identity and gender on EI. In other words, while there were varying levels of Christian college EI in this study's participants', the difference is not the effect of an interaction between the students' cultural identity levels and their gender. As a result, there was no evidence to reject this study's third and final null hypothesis.

Results from this study's analyses parallels Kar, Saha, and Mondal's (2014) findings that one's culture predisposes one's EI level, as well as the findings of Garner, Mahatmya, Brown and Vesely's (2014) which asserted that EI is sometimes evidenced by culturally specific characteristics. Conversely, this study's results contradicts findings in other studies which noted no statistically significant differences of EI levels among undergraduate college students based on their culture/ethnicity (Adams, 2011; Gunkel, Schlagel, & Engle, 2014). The variance in results from this study and those of existing research may be explained by the studies' limitations; those of the current study are detailed later in this chapter.

Implications

The fact that this is the first research study to examine the effect of cultural identity on the EI levels of Christian college students studying in the USA highlights the uniqueness of the

topic. Based on the infancy of this examination of EI, cultural identity, and Christian college students, it provides direction for future research studies and contributes to the existing body of literature. Leaders at Christian higher learning institutions in the USA should consider the results generated in this, and other studies, which show that a difference between emotions management and usage and between male and female EI levels exist among the diverse student bodies and of today's college campuses.

As a result of that existing difference in study results, it can be argued that there exists a need for establishing a baseline knowledge of Christian college student EI levels upon entrance to the college and again at the point of graduation. Such data will provide an idea of the growth of EI that occurred over the length of the students' college careers. Based on the evidence regarding the implications related to behaviors which stem from low EI levels and the desire of the workforce of today for employees which have high EI, Christian college students should be assisted with the growth of their EI.

The results from the interaction effect of this study support the notion that cultural identity plays a role in the development of EI. Colleges must be careful to assist students with moderate to high cultural identity to help them comprehend and acquire EI. Students who find themselves floundering in an environment that is too different from their cultural norms may be unable to adjust their behaviors to "fit in" on campus. Assistance with EI skills specifically related to cultural identity will provide support to students who arrive on campus without the necessary skills to successfully navigate the cultural diversity represented in today's student bodies.

Limitations

The literature review and analyses for this study provide evidence that EI growth can be affected by one's culture and gender however, limitations also exist. While the sample was sufficiently sized for the study's causal-comparative design, insufficient numbers of each individual cultural identity grouping (i.e. Mexican, Indian, French, Hawaiian, German, Japanese, etc.) resulted in the merging of cultural identity groups to form the four groups represented in this study (Caucasian, Black/African American, Hispanic, and Mixed Identities). Perhaps if groups were kept to a specific identity, instead of being merged together, a stronger result for the differences between the identity groups may have been achieved.

A second limitation stems from the types of participants themselves. While every attempt was made to ensure the participants were at least 18 years of age, younger respondents may still have taken the surveys. In the event that students under the age of 18 submitted survey responses, because not all college students mature at the same rate, the maturity levels of the participants could have been at play. For example, a participant's youth/immaturity could have skewed results if there was a lack of understanding about how emotions factor into daily life. Further, if participants under the age of 18 submitted surveys, they could have been dual enrollment students that had not yet fully experienced the dynamics of a large population of diverse students such as is possible on a college campus. Another possible participant related limitation could be the variance between the total number (after the removal of outliers and the high cultural level participants) of males ($n = 46$) and females ($n = 110$) represented in the results. The study may have had different results if there had been more equal numbers in the gender group.

The study was designed to examine the EI levels of undergraduate students. It should be noted that not all of the learning management systems utilized by the 29 the institutions possessed the same capabilities for sorting the student population when it was time to send the invitation. As a result, besides the already stated fact that a minor could have theoretically had exposure to and responded to the invitation, it can also be assumed that graduate students could have receive one, too. The presence of a graduate student population included in this study could be perceived as a limitation since those students have the potential to be older, more mature and perhaps more emotionally intelligent than the undergraduates.

Another limitation lies in the mode of data collection. "Participant self-response is a limitation due to subjectivity and an increase in responder bias" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005). While still a novelty, the addition of EI skills training has infiltrated some, but not all, college campuses. For those participants attending institutions which already include some facet of EI instruction, those students participating in this study may have already deduced what sort of answers were necessary in order to demonstrate a possession of emotional intelligence. In addition, as noted earlier, the fact that one is a believer may have some bearing on one's EI levels. Because it can be assumed that the presence of the Holy Spirit in a Christian's life signifies that a believer may understand that one's testimony can be affected by behaviors associated with low EI levels, it can also be assumed that such an understanding may have affected the results of this study. The reliance of self-reported cultural identity may also be a limitation.

Recommendations for Future Research

In all future research, the limitations experienced in this study should be avoided, if possible. This study was designed to build upon the anemic current literature and to extend the

findings of previous research related to EI, cultural identity, gender and the Christian college student. The lack of evidence for the need to examine the effect of cultural identity and gender on EI levels generated through this study should not be viewed as a reason to stop the investigation. In fact, the opposite is true since the existing body of literature includes both significant and non-significant results.

Future research studies may present significant findings regarding EI and cultural identity if the studies were to utilize only American participants studying abroad. Students in this study from the States studying in the States, regardless of their cultural identity level, may have unconsciously allowed a greater influence of the US culture in their responses. That unconscious interference may have skewed the results and lowered the overall significance levels of the differences in EI levels between cultural identities. Similarly, different results may be achieved if future research utilizes only Christian college participants from outside this country studying here in the USA.

Future research consideration should also be made to the EI levels and cultural identities of the faculty and staff at Christian colleges. Students on college campuses spend a great deal of time with professors, advisors and coaches and the hidden curricula regarding EI presented by those individuals may play a part in the EI levels of the students.

Two additional future research study suggestions include the examination of the students within specific degree programs and within individual religions. Because of the differences in the types of people that are suited for/drawn to some degrees and because of the increase in job descriptions that now request individuals with high EI, it may prove beneficial to look at the EI levels associated with cultural identities and individual degrees. Further, this study utilized

Christian colleges with varying religious backgrounds. It may prove useful to categorize the participants by religion.

Because the effect of emotions on college students is not limited to only those students attending courses on campus, future research should also approach EI, cultural identity and gender from the perspective of online-only college students. While not included in this study's sample, online-only college students often experience the same emotional issues. In a research study that surveyed more than 300 public university online students in southwest China, the researchers discovered that emotion self-management is positively related to academic positives (Xu, Du, & Fan, 2014). A similar study conducted among 300 online undergraduate college students in the USA "highlighted the potential benefit of attending to student emotions since research has recently identified the close link between self-regulation and online learning" (Artino & Jones, 2012, p. 170, 175).

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APPENDIX A

TEIQue-SF

Instructions: Please answer each statement below by putting a circle around the number that best reflects your degree of agreement or disagreement with that statement. Do not think too long about the exact meaning of the statements. Work quickly and try to answer as accurately as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. There are seven possible responses to each statement ranging from 'Completely Disagree' (number 1) to 'Completely Agree' (number 7).

1 . . . . 2 . . . . 3 . . . . 4 . . . . 5 . . . . 6 7

Completely Disagree   **Completely Agree**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Expressing my emotions with words is not a problem for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I often find it difficult to see things from another person's viewpoint.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. On the whole, I'm a highly motivated person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I usually find it difficult to regulate my emotions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I generally don't find life enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I can deal effectively with people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I tend to change my mind frequently.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Many times, I can't figure out what emotion I'm feeling.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I often find it difficult to stand up for my rights.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I'm usually able to influence the way other people feel.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. On the whole, I have a gloomy perspective on most things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Those close to me often complain that I don't treat them right.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I often find it difficult to adjust my life according to the circumstances.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. On the whole, I'm able to deal with stress.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. I often find it difficult to show my affection to those close to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. I'm normally able to "get into someone's shoes" and experience their emotions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. I normally find it difficult to keep myself motivated.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. I'm usually able to find ways to control my emotions when I want to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. On the whole, I'm pleased with my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. I would describe myself as a good negotiator.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. I tend to get involved in things I later wish I could get out of.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. I often pause and think about my feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. I believe I'm full of personal strengths.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. I tend to "back down" even if I know I'm right.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. I don't seem to have any power at all over other people's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. I generally believe that things will work out fine in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. I find it difficult to bond well even with those close to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. Generally, I'm able to adapt to new environments.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. Others admire me for being relaxed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix B

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure – MEIM

In this country, people come from many different countries and cultures, and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or <u>ethnic groups</u> that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Asian American, Chinese, Filipino, American Indian, Mexican American, Caucasian or White, Italian American, and many others. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in: In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be _____

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

(4) Strongly agree   (3) Agree   (2) Disagree   (1) Strongly disagree

1- I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as
       its history, traditions, and customs.
2- I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members
       of my own ethnic group.
3- I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.
4- I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.
5- I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.
6- I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
7- I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.
8- In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked
       to other people about my ethnic group.
9- I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.
10- I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food,
       music, or customs.
11- I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.
12- I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.

13- My ethnicity is
        (1) Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
        (2) Black or African American
        (3) Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
        (4) White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
        (5) American Indian/Native American
        (6) Mixed; Parents are from two different groups
        (7) Other (write in): _____

14- My father's ethnicity is (use numbers above)
15- My mother's ethnicity is (use numbers above)

16- My gender is ☐ Male ☐ Female

Appendix C

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

September 28, 2018

Maria Teresa Dustman
IRB Exemption 3392.092818: A Causal-Comparative Study of the Effect of Cultural Heritage on Emotional Intelligence Levels of Christian College Students

Dear Maria Teresa Dustman,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

> (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
> (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

Grace Baker

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

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Appendix D

Dear <u>XYZ Christian College</u> Student,

Please read the two attached documents:

1. A letter from Dr. _____ at <u>XYZ Christian College</u> explaining the reason for this email.
2. A Consent Form which will help you decide if you would like to participate in my research study.

To proceed to the two study surveys, click on the following links (please complete both surveys)…
- Survey 1 = https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DustmanSurvey1
- Survey 2 = https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DustmanSurvey2

It may help you to know that other student participants have only spent 2 to 3 minutes per survey.

Thank you very much,

Researcher

Appendix E

CONSENT FORM
A Causal-Comparative Study of the Effect of Cultural Identity on Emotional Intelligence Levels
of Christian College Students
Teresa Dustman
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of Christian college students. The world is a smaller place than it used to be and Christian colleges in America are more diverse than in previous generations. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a residential, undergraduate student with a minimum age of 18 at a Christian college located in the USA. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Teresa Dustman, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to determine if Christian college students' cultural identity affects their levels of emotional intelligence. Specifically, this study seeks data from undergraduate, residential Christian college students over the age of seventeen, at Christian colleges within the United States.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to:
1. Complete an anonymous, online survey to measure your emotional intelligence level and cultural identity. The estimated time for completion is 10-20 minutes.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Participant responses will be anonymous.
- Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. Any hard copies of data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet and the researcher will have the only key. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or your school. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time, prior to submitting the survey, without affecting those relationships.