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ASSESSMENT OF CUEA MBA PROGRAM CONTRIBUTION TO  
GREATER EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** This study assessed the Catholic University of Eastern Africa University (CUEA) Graduate Business School MBA contribution to developing and enhancing Emotional Intelligence skills among its MBA students.

**Methodology:** Data was collected using various instruments: A survey with structured questionnaires administered to a target population of 40 second year MBA students; in-depth interviews with 8 second-year MBA students, and 8 CUEA MBA lecturers; and a review of CUEA curriculum in relation to a benchmark of 10 MBA Programs in the best Business Schools of international and regional universities. A concurrent mixed method was used to achieve information with construct validity and chain of evidence from the multiple sources of data. The analysis technique was explanation based, for the qualitative data, and some descriptive analysis was carried out for the quantitative data.

**Results:** The findings show that, the CUEA MBA program does not have EI (emotional intelligence) as one of its core skills development, while most of the best Business Schools do. CUEA MBA Program does not have specific EI objectives, and as a result its lecturers have never focused on it and the students' EI awareness, knowledge, and skills are low.

**Contribution to policy and practice:** The study recommends that CUEA MBA program needs to be incorporated with EI skills development and make it a primary skill to be developed to the students irrespective of their area of specialization. The study further recommends that EI skills should be developed not only at the MBA level, but also among undergraduate students, as suggested by some of the lecturers who participated in this study.

**Key Words:** *EI (Emotional Intelligence), EI Objectives, Awareness, Knowledge and Skills, CUEA MBA Curriculum, Developing and Enhancing EI, Effective Future Business Leaders*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

MBA students over the past years are graduating and joining a business world that has undergone a fundamental transformation. (Joyner & Mann, 2011) Identified three leadership challenges they are facing; managing complex and rapid change; making decisions amid a climate of uncertainty; and standing out in a hyper-competitive marketplace. In a study of MBA students, (Boyatzis, Stubbs, and Taylor 2002) concluded that MBA programs should put forth a concerted effort to integrate emotional intelligence training into the curriculum using approaches that include self-assessment and self-development. These programs in return would result in positive employment outcomes and leadership abilities in the students that would be fundamental in their careers. Apart from this, literature shows the various benefits developing emotional intelligence among students, as it is seen that students with higher EI are seen to perform better academically. In other benefits, it is seen that higher EI has also been linked to better communication, learning strategies, and self-esteem (Shubhangini 2015).

Many business schools are rethinking the curriculum of their MBA programs. This trend is due to the current business and economic environment and the resulting increase in attention and criticism directed towards MBA programs. Ethical breaches of the last two decades followed by the severe weakening of global financial system have left stakeholders from diverse sectors questioning the appropriateness of traditional approaches to the training preparation of business decision makers. Many of these critics have begun to question the fundamental relevance of the MBA (Elmore, 2010). Criticism is being directed to both what and how business schools teach. Traditionally business education has been presented with the emphasis on analysis rather than on synthesis. (Boyatzis, Stubbs, & Taylor, 2002) In their study found it is possible to develop cognitive and emotional; competencies, but not through a typical MBA curriculum. Recognizing these limitations, some of the new approaches being integrated into MBA curriculum include activities aimed at preparing students to: collaborate effectively across disciplines; adapt to change; work with flexibility; and think critically. As MBA programs are redesigned, priority is placed on more fully linking content to context and ensuring that opportunities for effective leadership through decision making are integrated throughout the program.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

MBA curriculum most significant shortcoming from previous studies was in the courses that aided the development of interpersonal skills. As business schools engage in rethinking their curriculum and approaches to developing effective business leaders, the competencies associated with EI are becoming an increasingly important part of the conversation. The relationship between emotional intelligence and effective leadership has attracted considerable attention. Yet no study has been conducted to assess the CUEA Graduate Business School MBA program contribution to develop and enhance EI for its students. This study, therefore, will help to fill this gap and effort to give opinions and thoughts to improve the training of these students and equip them with competencies that will set them apart as effective leaders.

### **1.2 Research Objectives**

- i. Assess the CUEA MBA curriculum contribution to developing and enhancing EI.
- ii. Assess the CUEA MBA curriculum in relation to other schools of business that focus on developing and enhancing their students' EI.
- iii. Assess the CUEA MBA students' extent of training on EI.

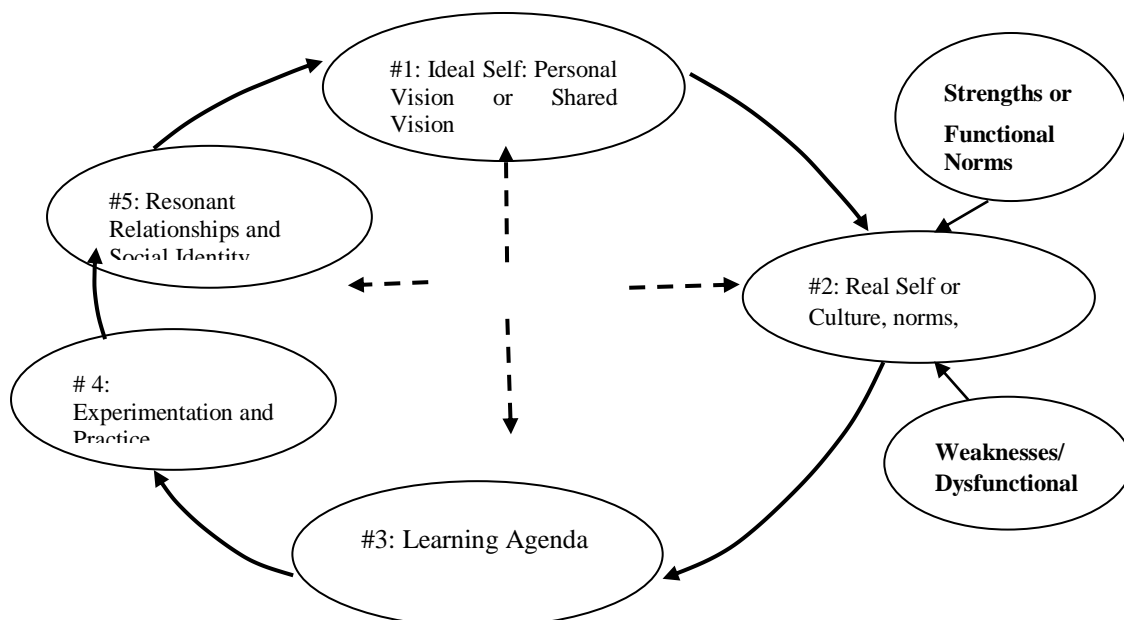
iv. Assess the CUEA MBA lecturers' emphasis of training on EI.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

#### Emotional Intelligence Competencies Development through Intentional Change Theory

Intentional change theory, originally self-directed learning theory is a helpful framework in describing the essential components of desirable, sustainable change in one's behavior, thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. This theory includes five phases that explain the implementation of this sustainable change. These five phases include: 1) the Ideal Self, 2) the Real Self, 3) the Learning Plan, 4) Experimentation and practice with new behaviors, 5) and trusting relationships that support a person's development experience. Each of these are shown in the figure below.



**Figure 1: Boyatzis' Intentional Change Theory in Fractals or Multiple Levels (2008, 2015)**

The 'change' aspect of ICT can be viewed in many different ways including how one acts, how an individual talks about their visions and aspirations, or even the way they feel and react in certain situational contexts and people around their life. There are two fundamental aspects to effective application of ICT framework: desire and sustainable change. When the change is perceived as desired, it means the individual in question in this study the student wants the change to occur. When the change is sustainable, it means it lasts a relatively long time. These two aspects are vital because research has shown that information acquired temporarily (i.e., for a test or presentation), are soon forgotten (Specht & Sandlin, 1991). Specht and Sandlin (1991) stated that the average half-life of accounting knowledge, from an introductory accounting course in a top ranked MBA program, was approximately six and half weeks. Students in such an MBA program may seem interested about learning the material presented, but then proceed to disregard it or forget-unless, it is something which they actually wanted to learn in the first place. In this way, it appears that most if not

all, sustainable behavioral change is intentional. Not to mention that a “desirable, sustainable change” may also include the desire to maintain a current desirable state, relationship, or habit.

Through the natural momentum of life, we often find ourselves changing towards or out of less desirable states. Sometimes this happens when external forces (Our bosses, our colleagues, our friends) take notice of an undesirable quality and bring it into our awareness (e.g., during a performance evaluation). Sometimes this happens when individuals high in emotional self-awareness or mindfulness (Boyatzis & Mckee, 2005) catch notice of a less desirable state and they will experience that change process as a more natural phenomenon. This experience, be it internally or externally influenced, is what Boyatzis (1982) termed as epiphany or discovery. The first discovery and suggested starting point for the process on intentional change is the discovery of who you want to be (the Ideal Self). The individual ideal self has three core components: 1) an image or vision of a desired future which does not presently exist, 2) the belief that one can attain this new vision, and 3) the aspect of one’s core identity which will assist to build the desired future (Boyatzis, 2006). This creates an opportunity and challenge for MBA programs around the world to find ways in which to capture students’ passions and imaginations for the future. The primary challenge been to avoid pushing MBA students towards the ‘ought’ self: a future in which an individual is compelled to be (e.g., you should be an accountant because you are good with numbers). The second discovery is that of whom you are right now (the Real Self).

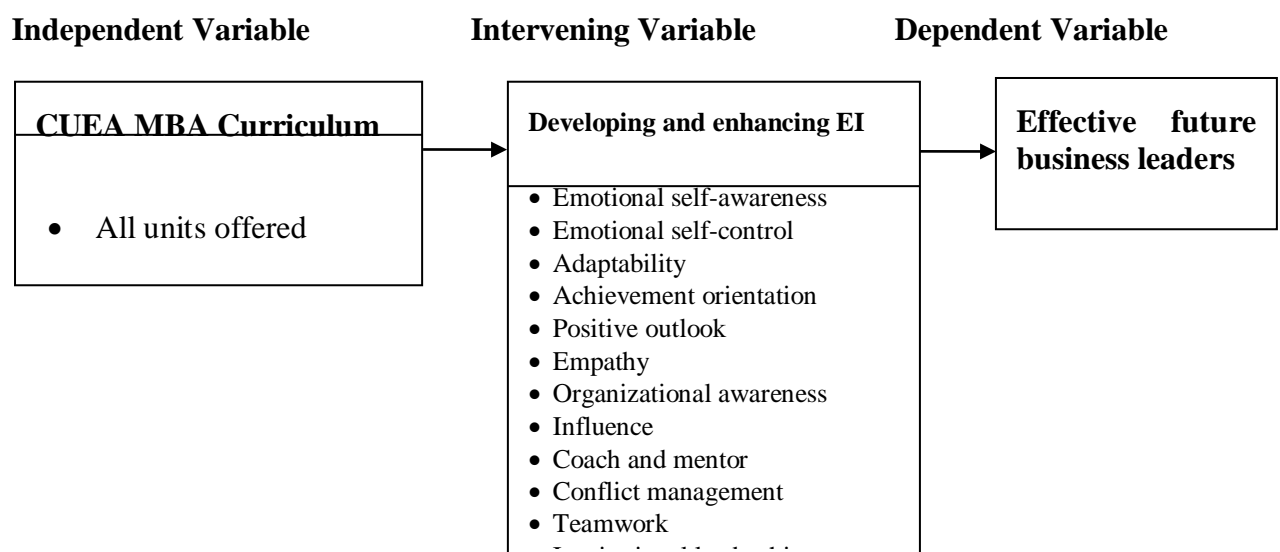
In order to be completely aware of the real self, an individual must take the connection between their current self and the person that others see them as. In general, there tends to be a disconnect between self and others assessments. One reason is that individuals often protect themselves from the intake of different views of self as a defense mechanism. Another, common reason is a lack of consistent feedback received over time. For example an individual going through a semi-annual performance review, receiving feedback particularly negative feedback, every six months may catch someone off guard because the perception was building over time and they were unaware of this growing perception. This is what has manifested itself in MBA programs over the years. With standardized exams, students are not receiving feedback at a rate that can assist with development of their emotional intelligence. Combination of inconsistent feedback with the earlier mentioned research about the forgetfulness of temporarily acquired information, one can see the vicious cycle during the MBA programs. Conversation between the ideal self and the real self leads to identifying gaps when they are inconsistent with one another, this generates a development opportunity to enhance abilities such as EI that eliminate these differences.

Third discovery in the ICT model is the proactive development of an agenda with a key focus being on that of the desired future. The purpose of a learning agenda is to focus an individual’s energy and effort on personal development. Many MBA students often strive to improve their general business acumen and cognitive intelligence when attending an MBA program in order to prepare themselves for ‘the real world’. Rarely do we hear MBA students talk about developing themselves during their time in these programs. This tends to be a results if students having a performance orientation instead of a learning orientation. In general, having a performance orientation evokes anxiety and doubts about whether or not we can change or improve ourselves, especially in behavioral capabilities like EI (Chen et al., 2000) while learning orientation arouses a positive belief in an individual’s capability and the hope of improvement. The fourth discovery is often where individuals struggle to make the actual changes-experimenting and practicing desired changes. The success in this

discovery is, understanding the differences between experimenting and practicing. Once an individual has put together a plan of action, they need to experiment with the change by trying it out in a comfortable setting. Change efforts are most effective when they occur in conditions in which the person feels safe (Kolb & Boyatzis, 1970).

This sense of psychological safety creates an atmosphere in which the person can try new behavior, perceptions, and thoughts with relatively less risk of shame, embarrassment, or serious consequences of failure. For example, an MBA student with a desire to strengthen their EI competencies, they may reach out to a colleague in order to try the new skills. It is after a period of experimentation when the individual practices the new skills in actual settings within which they wish to use them, such as workplace. The intentional change is a continuous improvement process. In order to successfully develop and enhance a new competence, individuals must actively find ways to learn more from current or ongoing experiences. The fifth and final discovery is a focus on the relationships that enable us to learn. Our relationships with others around us are an essential part of our environment. The most crucial relationships are often a part of groups that have particular importance to us. These relationships and groups give us a sense of identity, guide us as to what is appropriate and “good” behavior, and provide feedback on our behavior. These groups help to keep us accountable- they are the most important source of protection from relapses or returning to our earlier forms of behavior. More often than not, the best relationship MBA students have occurs inside the pages of a textbook rather than with one another or their faculty members which is detrimental to their EI development and more specifically their social skill.

### Conceptual framework



**Figure 2: Conceptual Framework**

### EI Research

#### EI and Effective leadership

Leadership is about influencing people while providing guidance and direction as needed (Bano, 2013). Effective leaders tend to be experts in terms of how they respond to work load, discipline, handle stress, communicate the goals of organizations by bringing innovation and polishing the performance of their subordinates. Emotional Intelligence enables leaders to empathically address their followers, thus building high-quality leader-follower relations and strengthening followers’ identification with and trust in the leader

(Cam & Linda, 2016). Pia (2015) posited that leaders' contextual performance increasingly drives productivity and effectiveness in knowledge-intensive work. Resultatively, where managers in fields of engineering were earlier hired and promoted largely on technical skills, today they are demanded for personal qualifications such as social skills and self-leadership abilities. Some categorisations, therefore, call for analytical competence, inter-relational competence, and emotional competence, as keys helping tackle the various aspects of emotionality at work (Schein, 2010).

### **EI and Leaders' Attributes**

Cam & Linda (2016) during their research on self efficacy and self-awareness as moral insights to effective leadership, identify self-awareness as a keystone to EI which is also supported by other studies e.g., (Shipper & Davy, 2002). All these studies identify self-awareness serving as the foundation of emotional and psychological development necessary to achieve effective leadership. Some critical attributes of an emotionally intelligent effective leader, is the ability to act as team players, inspire and direct their followers to accomplishing their organizational endeavors. Communicating and implementing their vision effectively, control task processes, and reward people accordingly. Getting along at work is reflected in the ability to work well in teams, and empowering others (Usman, Muhammad, Muhammad, & Ubaid, 2016). When success is achieved in showing these behaviors, leaders build their reputation for being good team players, organizational citizens, and service providers. Team work and empowerment facilitate the behavioural interactions and attitudes needed for effective business leaders to achieve outcomes related to their organizational objectives (Bartram, 2005). Emotional Intelligence has been shown to be linked to high performance. High performing managers have portrayed having emotional intelligence competencies than do average-performing managers (Bano, 2013; Moon & Hur, 2011), leaders with high emotional intelligence select team members with more effective behaviors than do leaders with low EI (Caruso, Mayer, & Salovey, 2002), and emotional intelligence is positively related to leadership effectiveness (Kerr, Garvin, Heaton, & Boyle, 2006). Research has revealed that emotional, social, and cognitive intelligence have positive effects on managerial effectiveness and career success (Usman, Muhammad, Muhammad, & Ubaid, 2016). Parrish (2015) investigating the relevance of emotional intelligence for effective higher academic leadership, found EI recognised as a highly relevant and important requirement for the leaders. Additionally, the investigation ascertained the EI traits related to empathy, inspiring and guiding others and responsibly managing oneself were most applicable for effective leadership. EI is one of the strongest predictor that has significant impact on managerial effectiveness compared to other types of intelligences.

### **EI and Leaders' Leadership Style**

Emotions play a fundamental role in leaders' decision making and their behavior. Emotionally intelligent leaders acknowledge that emotional reactions to workplace events mediate the relationship between the events and various attitudinal and behavioral outcomes: For example, an employee being shouted at by a supervisor is likely to evoke negative emotions such as anger and anxiety (Fox & Stalworth, 2010). The importance of emotions in the workplace renders it vital for leaders to be emotionally intelligent (Goleman D. , 1995). Especially because leadership is an emotion-inducing phenomenon, wherein effective leadership involves emotion-management process of leaders managing their emotions and those of their followers (Zhidong, Bindu, Mark, & Gian, 2016). Effective leaders utilize their emotional intelligence competencies to employ socio-emotional leadership, this leadership style is multifaceted and comprises behaviors such as

providing encouragement and maintaining amiable relationships with subordinates (Zhidong, Bindu, Mark, & Gian, 2016). These relationships are characterized by mutual trust, respect for followers' ideas, and involves supportive behaviors such as expressing appreciation for followers' efforts (Bano, 2013) and showing concern for their welfare (Boyatzis, Massa, & Good, 2012).

Leadership behaviors can evoke a wide spectrum of emotions in followers ranging from optimism and joy to frustration and anger (Zineldin & Hytter, 2012), and these emotions strongly influence the overall work experience and behavior of followers. Emotions play a central role in effective leadership because leadership is essentially an emotional process wherein leaders display emotions and attempt to evoke emotion in followers (Zhidong, Bindu, Mark, & Gian, 2016). EI gets a lot of merits from literature with regards to effective leadership and is depicted as an important attribute for effective leadership (Goleman, Boyatzis, & Mckee, 2004). EI helps effective leaders to arouse positive emotions in their followers and can alleviate followers' negative emotions during times of crisis. Leaders with high levels of EI are apt at integrating emotional considerations when considering alternative solutions to problems and behaving in ways that are considerate and respectful of their own emotions and those of others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Usman et al. (2016) argue that emotionally intelligent leaders can recognize and manage their emotions and other's emotions in the organization to create effective working environments and relationships. Boyatzis et al. (2009) have found that effective executive focus on persuasiveness, establishing inter and intra personal relationships, and self-confidence than the ordinary executives. Therefore, EI competencies were considered helpful for managers and business leaders to communicate smart goals, construct problem solving attitude, delegating, supporting to fulfill objectives and goals on time (Usman, Muhammad, Muhammad, & Ubaid, 2016). Boyatzis et al. (2012; 2013) have found a linkage between EI and leadership effectiveness, providing a thought for organization leaders to recognize the importance of EI competencies and develop their human capital to gain competitive edge.

### **EI and Leaders' Change Management Competence**

Hamid, Abdullah, & Hashed (2016) findings from their study to examine the effect of leadership behavior and EI on readiness for change, confirmed that leadership behavior and EI have significant effects on employees' readiness for change. Change management being a factor of effective leadership it cannot be ignored that a leaders' EI has a great influence on the organization employees' readiness to change. Furthermore, a study by Dasborough, Lamb, & Suseno (2015) revealed that positive and negative emotions of a leader are related to commitment, resistance, and change support of their subordinates. Goleman (1995) contended, EI is necessary for leaders to ensure their employees support the change in the organization and also evoke their positive attitude toward the intended change. Researchers have also found significant impact on psychological growth, individual, and organizational success (Goleman and Boyatzis, 2008; Goleman D. , 2006). Emotional intelligence creates a sense of proactive thinking distinguishing between competent managers and ordinary managers (Caruso and Salovey, 2004; Goleman D. , 1998). Therefore, emotionally intelligent managers are more responsive to critical situations of dynamic business environments. Boyatzis et al. (2009) have highlighted that effective leaders focus on planning and initiatives.

### **EI and Leaders' Conflict Management Competence**

Margaret & Robert (2015) found EI abilities of problem solving, social responsibility, and impulse control were the most directly related to how effective business leaders managed



conflicts in their organizations. They suggested that for management development purposes, leaders should attempt to improve on EI abilities for effective conflict management. More scholars have provided evidence of a direct relationship between EI and effective conflict management. EI facilitates a leader's ability to have successful interactions and positive relations with others (Law, 2004; Lopes, 2003), to develop collective goals with their direct reports (George, 2000), and to discern the emotional climate in organizations (Ashkanasy and Daus, 2002). Individuals with a high degree of EI may have less relationship conflict or manage this conflict more effectively (Lopes et al., 2005). Yang and Mossholder (2004) proposed that greater levels of group EI will decrease group-level task and relationship conflict. Teams with less defined EI climate (i.e. lacking empathy and emotion management) experience greater task and relationship conflict (Ayoko et al., 2008). And a leader's emotion management mitigates the negative effects of relationship conflict on their team's performance. A lack of impulse control, or the inability to manage emotions, has been cited as the primary reason for the career derailment of successful executives (Margaret & Robert, 2015). The inability to handle emotions effectively may prevent the necessary information processing for managing conflict constructively. Fulmer and Barry (2004) theorize that emotionally intelligent negotiators will more accurately understand and manage highly charged situations.

### **Emotional Intelligence Models**

#### **The Ability-Based Model**

The Ability-Based Model was the brain child of two researchers Salovey and Mayer (1990). They defined emotional intelligence as: The ability to perceive emotion, integrate emotion to facilitate thought, understand emotion and to regulate emotions to promote personal growth. This model illustrates emotions as a crucial prerequisite of information useful in the social environment interactions and in social relationships, it also highlights different individuals have varying abilities to process these emotional information and relate to overall cognitive processes (McPheat, 2017). This model refers specifically to the cooperative combination of intelligence and emotion in response to situations; it identifies emotional information processing as an essential precursor to emotional regulation (Brackett and Mayer, 2003). It is designed to capture maximal performance and is measured with the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso-Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) that was developed in 2002 (Mayer et al., 2004). Ability model proposes four main types of emotional abilities, which fall along a hierarchical continuum as a sequential set of steps, with emotional perception; ability of an individual to recognize his own emotions and to understand the emotions in others expressed in faces, voices, and pictures as the first step, followed by emotional use; ability to use emotions to perform other cognitive activities, then the third step being emotional understanding; ability to perceive the shades of emotion that exist and how different emotions interact with each other and also how emotions evolve over a period of time. Lastly is the emotional management; ability to self-regulate emotions and to regulate emotions in others (McPheat 2017).

#### **The Trait Model**

The Trait Model is the most recent model of emotional intelligence proposed and published by Petrides, Perez-Gonzalez and Furnham, (2007). It deviates from the idea that emotional intelligence is ability-based. Instead it views individuals having various self-perceptions and emotional traits as part of their personalities (McPheat, 2017). It is measured with the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) that was developed as a result of ongoing research (Petrides et al., 2007). Proponents of this model consider emotional

intelligence a multifaceted construct encompassing 15 different emotion-related behavioral dispositions thought to affect the way an individual copes with demands and pressures (Petrides et al., 2007).

### **Bar-On's Mixed Model**

Bar-On (1997) through his works coined the term Emotional Quotient, he conceptualized emotional intelligence encompassing a variety of traits, skills, and abilities unrelated to cognition yet connected to emotional and social knowledge that help individuals cope effectively with daily demands and pressures from their environment. Bar-On's model is rooted in personality theory and focuses on personal psychological well-being and adaptability. Bar-On (1997) opined, emotional intelligence is divided into five components that facilitate emotionally and socially intelligent behavior. The first component, intrapersonal intelligence, is composed of emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, and independence. Second is interpersonal intelligence, which is composed of empathy, social responsibility, and personal relationships with others. The third component, adaptability, incorporates flexibility and problem solving. The fourth, stress management, includes tolerance of stress and control of impulses. The final component, general mood, is composed of happiness and positive outlook (Bar-On, R. 1997). Bar-On developed an instrument to measure the emotional intelligence of an individual, that is, the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i). It is a self-report measure of emotionally and socially competent behavior rather than a measure of personality traits or cognitive capacity (Bar-On, 2000).

### **Goleman's Mixed Model**

Goleman's Mixed Model was described by Goleman (1995), and today it is the most widely accepted and used model of EI. It involves a range of competencies which are broken down into skill sets and together depict a person's level of emotional intelligence (McPheat, 2017). Similar to the ability model, this model also portrays these competencies that fall along a hierarchical continuum as a sequential set of steps: the first being self-awareness; knowing how an individual is feeling at a particular moment and using their gut feelings to help drive decision making, having a realistic understanding of ones abilities and a strong self-confidence (Goleman D. , 1998). The second competence is the self-management; ability of handling one's emotions such that they don't interfere but facilitate pursuing of their goals, to delay gratification so as to recover well from emotional distress and translating an individual's deepest, truest preferences into action in order to improve and succeed. Social awareness is the third competence that involves sensing what others are feeling and being able to understand situations from others' perspective and cultivating relationships with a diverse range of people. Lastly is the fourth competence of social skill; an ability to handle emotions in respect to relationships with other people, reading the intricacies of social situations and interacting well using this skill to influence, persuade, negotiate, and lead (Goleman D. , 1998). Goleman's model of emotional intelligence recognizes that these competencies are not considered innate. Instead, they must be developed over time in order to develop and improve performance. Unlike IQ, which is believed to be 'fixed' by the time we reach adulthood, emotional intelligence can continuously be developed throughout one's lifetime (McPheat, 2017). Goleman and Boyatzis (2007) developed the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI) to provide a behavioral measure of emotion and social competencies, it measures these using five construct: motivation, social skill, self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy. (Moon & Hur, 2011) stated within each construct a set of competencies were viewed as learned capabilities that require training to achieve optimal performance. (Goleman, 1998) believed

individuals inherently possessed a predisposition for emotional intelligence that determined their potential for learning emotional competencies.

### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted a case study research design and targeted 40 MBA students in academic year 2016/2017 who were in their second year of study. An in-depth interview was also be conducted with 8 MBA students; these were 2 students from each of the four departments in the Graduate Business School – (Finance & Accounting, Human Resource, Marketing & Management, and Electronic Commerce), who were conveniently sampled from the total population of the 40 MBA students. Eight lecturers from the Catholic University Graduate Business School also participated in an in-depth interview, which included two lecturers from each of the four departments in the Graduate Business School. The study also included ten best ranked business and management schools – (three from USA, three from Europe, and four from Africa) were included in this case study as bench markers. The study used questionnaires, in-depth interview guides and documentations in collecting data. The quantitative data collected was analyzed using SPSS to give some descriptive statistics that augmented the qualitative data. This case study used an explanation building analytic technique.

### 4.0 RESULTS

#### Assessment of CUEA MBA Curriculum input to the Developing and Enhancing EI

The respondents involved in the survey were from the various areas of specialization provided in the MBA program. A majority of them being from Strategic Management representing 37.5% of those who participated in this study, students from Human Resource Management represented 27.5 % of the respondents, 20% were from Finance Management area of specialization, and finally those from Entrepreneurship represented 15% as depicted in table 1.

**Table 1: Area of Specialization**

Area of Specialization	Frequency	Percentage
Strategic Management	15	37.5
Human Resource Management	11	27.5
Finance Management	8	20.0
Entrepreneurship	6	15.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Emotional intelligence being an essential skill for competent leaders, the respondents were asked whether they had taken a core unit on leadership. A core unit would mean that every student taking the course must take the leadership unit, and therefore it is expected some discussion on Emotional Intelligence to have taken part in these classes. Majority of the respondents representing 60% stated to have taken a core unit on leadership, and 40% stated they had not taken a core unit on leadership as shown in table 2 below.

**Table 2: Core Unit on Leadership**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	24	60.0
No	16	40.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0</b>

This case study was seeking to know how the CUEA MBA program contributes to the development and enhancing of the EI skills to the MBA students. Respondents were therefore subjected to a question on whether they had taken a unit that discussed on emotional intelligence. As presented in table 3 below, majority of the respondents representing 67.5% responded they had not taken a unit that discussed about emotional intelligence. The remaining respondents who represented 32.5% stated to have studied a unit that discussed on EI.

**Table 3: Unit on Emotional Intelligence**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	13	32.5
No	27	67.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0</b>

A cross tabulation was of importance to relate the first and third questions. This will enable us to understand the difference of responses in the four areas of MBA specializations. Table 4 shows the summary results.

**Table 4: MBA Students Who Took a Unit on EI by Area of Specialization**

MBA Students by Area of Specialization	Taken a Unit that Discussed on EI		
	Yes	No	Total
Strategic Management	8	7	15
HRM	4	7	11
Finance Management	0	8	8
Entrepreneurship	1	5	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>13 (32.5%)</b>	<b>27 (67.5%)</b>	<b>40 (100%)</b>

As we can see from Table 4, only 32.5% of MBA students, or one third, say they have taken a Unit that discussed issues related to EI. Basically these students are from Strategic Management and Human Resource areas of specialization. The others, Finance Management and Entrepreneurship areas of specializations, don't seem to take any unit discussing on EI.

Another cross tabulation related the second and third questions; this was in an effort to understand whether those who undertook a core unit on leadership had discussions on EI skills, which are expected to be instilled to leadership students. Table 5 shows the summary of results.

**Table 5: MBA Students who took a Core Unit on Leadership and Emotional Intelligence**

Taken a Core Unit on Leadership	Discussed Issues on EI				Total
	Yes		No		
	N	%	N	%	
Yes	8	20	16	40	24
No	5	12	11	28	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>67.5</b>	<b>40</b>

As Table 5 presents, the findings, the majority, 16 students out of 24 who said they have taken a core Unit on leadership, responded to have not had discussions on emotional intelligence. Only 8 students out of 24 of those who took a core Unit on leadership stated

they had discussed about EI in their leadership classes. But among those students who did not take a core Unit on leadership, we find 5 out of 16 who say they had had some discussions about EI in other Units (or may be on their own readings). Here, we can clearly see that the majority of our MBA students at CUEA (67.5%) are not given opportunities to develop their EI.

Regarding CUEA MBA program contribution towards awareness and appreciation of EI skills, most of the respondents (55%) agreed that EI skills are essential to any competent leader, some of these respondents were aware and appreciated EI from their own prior knowledge on EI before they started their MBA course, and some who had EI discussions in the course of their lectures stated that this had been made aware to them in the course of their MBA studies; while the remaining 45% of the respondents disagreed with the idea (see Table 6 below).

**Table 6: Awareness and Appreciation of Emotional Intelligence for a Competent Leader:**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
strongly disagree	7	17.5
disagree	11	27.5
Agree	10	25.0
strongly agree	12	30.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Finally, the respondents were asked whether they had undergone any tests to measure their EI skills during their MBA studies. Majority of the respondents (65%) did not take any EI tests; while the remaining 35% of the respondents stated they had undergone EI skills tests (see Table 7).

**Table 7: Emotional Intelligence Test**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No	26	65.0
Yes	14	35.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### **4.1 Discussion**

According to the survey, only one third of MBA students have taken a Unit that discussed issues related to EI. Basically these students are from Strategic Management and Human Resource areas of specialization. The others, Finance Management and Entrepreneurship areas of specializations, don't seem to take any Unit on EI. But only 8 students out of 24 of those who took a core Unit on leadership stated they had discussed about EI in their leadership classes. But among those students who did not take a core Unit on leadership, we find 5 out of 16 who say they had had some discussions about EI in other Units (or may be on their own readings). Moreover, majority of CUEA MBA students responded to appreciate EI skills contribution to their leadership skills. But even the students who took units on EI did not have any EI tests, as a feedback, to measure their IE skills development (beginning and end of training). This probably shows that EI is not given adequate attention in the program.

#### **Assessment of CUEA MBA Curriculum as Compared to the Best Business Schools in the World**

This study has taken the best business schools MBA programs from around the world as a benchmark. The business schools MBA programs were studied by the researcher to know, based on their curriculum, what effort they are making to develop and enhance EI skills among their students. The researcher reviewed their course catalogues and through the course description identified how different institutions are developing their students' EI skills.

### **CUEA MBA Program**

Let us start from CUEA School of Business, MBA program. The school offers 54 course units, out of these 13 are core units. All students are expected to take all these thirteen units, 12 of the units need to be studied before the student chooses the area of specialization. Five out of the twelve core units, i.e., Managerial Ethics (that focuses on self-management and social skills), Management and Organizational Analysis (that focuses on social skills), Strategic Management (that focuses on social-awareness and social skills), Human Resource Management and Development (focusing on social skills), and Corporate Governance and Business Ethics (focusing on social skills). However, these emotional intelligence skills are not explicitly indicated in these courses' descriptions. The Program is structured to have electives in six areas of specialization; first, Marketing Management offering eight elective units and no elective unit has a description with any EI skills described or considered as objectives of the courses. Financial Management is another area of specialization offering seven electives. None of the courses' description implicitly or explicitly focuses on fostering EI skills to the students. Strategic Management is another area of specialization. It offers seven elective units, of which two are EI skills focused i.e Leadership and Personal Skills Development focusing on the four EI skills and Managing Change for Competitive Success focusing on social awareness and social skill aspects of EI. In particular one unit has a focus on developing the five EI skills. Human Resource Management is another area of specialization in the course. It offers seven elective units, none of which, based on their course description has objectives linked to developing EI skills of the students. The course also has a specialization course on Entrepreneurship, it offers five elective units and none has an objective on developing the EI skills according to the courses' description. Finally E-Commerce as an area of specialization in the program also offers seven elective units and none of the units' description mentions an aspect of EI skills as an objective to be developed in the course of taking the units.

### **Benchmarking**

In an effort to evaluate how the CUEA MBA program is doing in EI skill development, ten top Business schools' MBA programs were reviewed. These schools are listed by various MBA indexing bodies. The study has included top four Business schools in Africa namely United States International University Africa School of Business, Gordon Institute of Business School Pretoria Graduate School, Kenyatta University School of Business, and Lagos Business School. Three top Business schools in Europe namely: London Business School; INSEAD MBA; and HEC Paris. Top Three Business schools in America namely Graduate Stanford Business, Kellogg School of Management, and Yale School of Management.

Gordon Institute of Business School (Pretoria, S. Africa) was reviewed in this study and considering it is a leading Business School in Africa as per the Africa.com MBA ranking of 2017. According to (GIBS, 2018) the school offers 117 units for its MBA course, 29 of which have course descriptions explicitly dealing with EI skills development, i.e., Business Analysis and Communication, Entrepreneurship, Applied Decision Making, Leadership

and Corporate Accountability, Environment of Business Contemporary Issues in Governance, Contemporary Issues in Ethics, Contemporary Issues in Stakeholder Management Contemporary Issues in Leadership, Contemporary Issues in Organisational Behavior, Ethics and Leadership, Managing Human Capital, Business Opportunities and Innovation in Africa, Woman in Leadership, Leader as Coach, Corporate Governance Customer Centric Strategy, Contemporary Issues in Personal Effectiveness, Doing Business in India, The Moral Leader, Understanding Business in China, Manufacturing and the Environment, Sustainable Business, Global Economic Governance and Business Diplomacy, Personal Leadership Development, Advanced Entrepreneurship, Corporate Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Dealing with Change and Change Immunity. The school also has a leadership acceleration programme separate from the MBA curriculum that offers rigorous self-evaluation and active learning experiences, through challenges students are groomed to be more enthused and inspired to tackle more responsible leadership positions with confidence. The programme specifically focuses to develop personal brands, emotional intelligence, and social intelligence.

Graduate Stanford Business School offers a range of 110 course units to its MBA students, a review of (Graduate Stanford Business, 2018) showing the course description used in this research, 13 courses have EI skills explicitly outlined as objectives to be focused on and achieved by the students at the end of these courses. These courses are: Leadership and Organizational Behavior (LEAD), FIELD Foundations, Leadership and Corporate Accountability (LCA), FIELD Global Immersions, Authentic Leader Development, Power and Influence, Founders' Journey, Investing for Impact, The Arts of Communication, The Moral Leader, Managing, Organizing & Motivating for Value. Besides the curriculum courses, the school has a parallel leadership program known as Initiative for Leadership Education and Development (I-LEAD) which is designed to significantly increase the capacity of the MBA students in a different way. The program involves application of personal experiential testing, analysis, and reflection that unfolds in multiple steps, including formal classes mandatory for all the MBAs, and on-going coaching opportunities which focuses on developing the EI skills, the program runs throughout the MBA program.

HEC Paris' MBA program was also reviewed in this research being a top ranked school in Europe offering world class MBA according to the Financial Times Global MBA rankings 2018. According to (HEC PARIS, 2018) the MBA program has a range of 47 course units, inclusive of core courses and electives out of these, 4 courses have course descriptions explicitly outlining EI skills as objectives to be attained by students who take them at the end of the courses. These courses are: Problem Solving & Communications, Ethics and Sustainability, Organizational Behavior, Advanced Management. In line with the EI leadership skills, the MBA program has incorporated two programs for students to develop the leadership skills they learn in theory by putting them in action. The HEC Global Leaders Series is a hand-on leadership program where MBA students get to meet world leaders and have question and answer sessions with them. It also includes off campus leadership seminars where MBA students participate in physical and mental challenges that call for utilization of leadership theory learned in class. Another program for EI skills is known as The Executive Committee (TEC) on campus, this is a leadership coaching program where by students form small groups and get mentoring sessions from visiting CEOs.

INSEAD MBA program offers a range of 101 course units; core courses and electives (INSEAD MBA, 2018). Among the courses, 6 course units' descriptions explicitly outlined EI skills as outcomes to be learned by the students at the end of the following courses:

Organisational Behaviour 1, Business and Society, Customer Insight, Strategic Market Intelligence, Embracing Complex Change, Psychological Issues in Management. The program also has a parallel leadership program known as Personal Leadership Development Program (PLDP), it is designed to provide students with new standards of excellence in personal and interpersonal awareness, as well as communication effectiveness. It starts before the students arrive on campus and continues throughout the MBA programme. It consists of personal and interpersonal assessment tools, communication awareness, leadership-skills development, as well as professional and peer-based feedback on existing experiential learning opportunities, such as simulations, role plays and group exercises. Grounded in adult learning theory, it follows the Learning Cycle of engaging in, reflecting on, concluding and planning for an experience.

Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, was ranked among the top business schools offering world class MBA programs by the Financial Times Global 2018 MBA rankings, according to (Kellogg SOM, 2018) the MBA program offers a range of 220 course units; core units and electives included, 5 course unit's descriptions explicitly outlined EI skills as objectives to be attained by the students at the end of the following courses: Thought Leadership Seminar, Personal Leadership Insights, Perspectives on Leadership, Leading the Strategic Change Process, Creativity as a Business Tool. In addition to these courses, the program also has an accelerated MBA Leadership Development System that aims at strengthening knowledge, skills and mindset. The program prepares MBA students for high-impact roles around the world. It helps them develop their intellectual and emotional intelligence skills.

London Business School offering world class MBA its curriculum was reviewed, according to (London Business School, 2018) the MBA program offers a range of 91 course units core unit and electives included, and 8 course units have EI as an learning objective explicitly outlined in the following courses' descriptions: Global Leadership Assessment for Managers (GLAM), Leading Ethical Organisations, Managing Organizational Behavior, Building Relationships, Inter-Personal Dynamics, Negotiation and Bargaining, Self-Awareness, Entrepreneurship Summer School. The school offers a program throughout the students' MBA studies known as the Leadership Launch. The program focuses on developing the emotional intelligence five core competencies, it provides a varied and stimulating learning environment through simulations, panel discussions, group workshops and coaching. With the school's-wide leadership competencies framework as a foundation, the programme supports a self-directed study approach. The students identify individual development needs specific to their career goals, mapping them on to their framework alongside career center input and curriculum choices. Clear feedback outcomes are provided to the individuals for them to reflect on their success in each competency.

According to (Yale SOM, 2018), Yale School of Management offers a range of 76 course units inclusive of core courses and electives, 10 of the courses offered have EI skills explicitly outlined as learning outcomes for the following course: Managing Groups & Teams, Power & Politics, Interpersonal Dynamics, Business Ethics, Mastering Influence & Persuasion, Strategic Communication: Delivering Effective Presentations, Corporate Environment Management, Leadership Lab, Advanced Negotiations, Management Leadership & Humanities. In addition to the theory learned by the students in class, a leadership program known as Leadership Development Program (LDP) runs the full length of the program, giving the students a maximum opportunity to build the knowledge and experience they need to lead teams and organizations better. Through coursework, hands-on experience, and practice giving and receiving feedback, the LDP develops skills on



individual level, interpersonal/team level, organizational level, and global level. During the first weeks on campus, students receive instructions on the fundamentals of leadership, while also investigating and articulating their own priorities and values. Over the course of the first year, classes, speaker programs, and other experiences help build advanced leadership knowledge and skills. In the first year students develop their plan for leadership practicum, a significant endeavor that helps them advance towards their leadership aims. These practicum projects may take the form of club leadership, creating a new event or program for the school, engaging in community service, or launching a business. The students execute on the plan in their second year, while receiving professional coaching and continuing peer feedback. According to (Lagos Business School, 2018), Lagos Business School's MBA program offers a range of 36 course units inclusive of core courses and elective courses. The following five course units explicitly have EI skills as learning outcome objectives: Business Ethics, Human Behaviour in Organisation I, Human Behaviour in Organisation II, Human Resource Management (HRM), Negotiation. The program has no leadership program as observed in other schools.

United States International University Africa - Chandaria School of Business one of the business schools in Kenya and locally ranked to offer a quality MBA degree, according to (USIU, 2018) in its program it offers a range of 50 course units and even though the program has courses that can be used to develop EI skills like: Development of Social Sustainable Enterprises, Human Resource Management, Strategic Management, and Leadership and Ethics, none of them focuses on developing EI skills as an objective from their course descriptions. According to (Kenyatta University, 2018), Kenyatta University Business School as reviewed offers and MBA program having 20 course units. Five core units and 15 elective units; out of all these units there are courses like: Business Strategic Behavior and Leadership, Management of Strategic Change, Marketing Communication Strategies, Human Resource Management, and Strategic Management that can focus on different skills of EI, though none of them has the objective of developing any the EI skills as per their course descriptions. It was also evident from the review there are no particular programs embedded in the MBA curriculum that students can develop or enhance the EI skills either.

### **Assessment of What CUEA MBA Students Think on the Extent of Training on EI**

This research being a case study, interviews were conducted and it involved both MBA students and the MBA lecturers. First, eight MBA students were interviewed. The in-depth interview consisted of seven open ended questions. Students when asked about whether they remember learning that higher EI enables them become better and more effective leaders, three of the respondents said yes they appreciated that EI would enable them become better leaders in their working environment, one among these three categorically stated this was learnt in one of the units taken in the MBA program, that was Human Resource Management. The other two stated that their opinion was based on what they know about EI and was not explicitly mentioned or discussed in class. Responding to the second part of the question on what they learned in the process, they poised that EI intelligence was essential to any leader who desires to have a globally competitive work force and organization. EI skills would help the leader to embrace diversity in their teams and bring out the best in these individuals. Two of the respondents stated the issue on EI was not explicitly discussed in class in any of the units taken by the students. Three of the respondents stated to have never heard of EI in course of their MBA program and even before the interview.

The second question focused on getting to know specifically which units taken during the MBA studies emphasized on EI skills development, five of the respondents mentioned a lot of EI skills were discussed about in Human Resource Management units, though not directly mentioned or linked to EI. The students related what was discussed in these classes to what they knew about EI. One of the respondents did not link any unit's contents to any of the EI skills development. One of the respondents stated that Management Accounting and Financial Management units had a link to EI skills, though this was not elaborated very clearly when the student was asked to. However, the respondent stated that as Financial Managers and Managerial Accountants individuals need to have self-awareness and social awareness skills to work with the top management teams and meet the organizational goals and at the same time acquiring and using the financial resources to meet the same goals. Another respondent stated all the EI skills were linked and discussed about in the Business Ethics class, though not directly mentioned as EI skills but they were indirectly discussed upon. The last respondent, mentioned a unit on Leadership skills and personal development. This unit discussed on EI skills explicitly and even had an assessment of the EI skills in class. The third question was on how EI training was conducted during the MBA program. Four of the respondents stated the training was conducted through class lectures and discussions. However, it was also evident from all these students the training was not on EI skills specifically but they related the training offered on how to deal with employees in Human Resource Management units to contribute to enhancing their EI skills. Four of the respondents stated to have not had any training relating to EI skills during their MBA studies.

The fourth question enquired on the specific EI skills the students identified to have developed in the course of their MBA studies. One of the respondents poised that none of the EI skills would be mentioned to have been developed during the MBA program. Two respondents stated they appreciated the empathy skill had been developed in the course of their MBA training. Three respondents pointed out self-awareness as a skill they developed through the MBA program. One respondent mentioned social-awareness as a skill developed. Finally Social skill and Self-management skills were also identified by one respondent as skills developed. Interviewees were also asked how they rated the CUEA MBA program had contributed to the development of their EI skill. Three respondents stated the MBA studies had a significant contribution to the development of some EI skills, they also mentioned that they were confident that some aspects of the program made them appreciate EI skills even if they were not mentioned to them as EI skills. One respondent felt there was no impact from the MBA training that could develop or enhance their EI skills. Four respondents attributed a partial contribution of developing their EI skill to the MBA course.

Respondents were also of the opinion that EI is an abstract phenomenon in the management and leadership arena. All respondents stated that EI to be an essential skill to any leader or manager to complement the technical skills that are also very important. The majority of the respondents linked the possession of EI skills would help the leaders to reduce conflicts in organizations, bring out the best in each team member and contribute significantly in times of organizational change. The last question focused on getting insights on what the students would recommend to the school as a way to enhance the development of EI among its MBA students. Majority of the respondents recommended the introduction of a unit for all students on EI, which would create more awareness of EI and its importance to these students who aspire to be leaders in their organizations. They also thought an introduction

of frequent seminars or workshops that would train students on EI in the course of their MBA studies would also be considered.

### **Assessment of CUEA MBA Lecturers Emphasis of Training on EI**

The first question to the lecturers focused on whether the units they taught had any EI content. Seven out of the eight respondents stated to have no emotional intelligence content in the units they taught. This ranged from those who taught Finance and Accounting units and E-commerce units, who specifically stated there was no content on EI. Lecturers from the Human Resource and Management department stated to have some aspects of emotional intelligence but it was not explicitly included in the content of what they taught in class. One of the respondents stated to have emotional intelligence content in the units taught in the entrepreneurship course, when probed to mention the specific course units the respondent stated it was a general concept in the entrepreneurship area of study. Second question was enquiring whether the lecturers remembered to have EI discussed as an aspect to be considered in the curriculum development or review. Out of the eight respondents only two had participated in the last curriculum review that had taken place in 2010, both stated that EI was not discussed or considered as an aspect to be included in the curriculum.

The third question enquired on whether the MBA program focused on developing both technical and EI skills of the students, and also how valuable the lecturers thought EI is to their students. On the first part of the question, seven of the respondents stated that the MBA program specifically focused on developing and enhancing the students' technical skill and very little efforts to develop soft skills like EI. One of the respondents gave a more elaborate explanation and stated that the MBA program was more of an academic degree and it focuses more on theoretical aspects. One of the respondents however, stated that the program is tailored to develop the students' technical skills and soft skills. The respondent linked the soft skills being developed more in entrepreneurship units. On the second part of the question on whether EI was valuable to the MBA students, all respondents stated that EI is essential to the aspect of decision making which will be a major function of these students when they get to the organizations. They all pointed out the fact that EI skills would complement the technical knowledge and give them added advantage as organizational leaders, when they are called upon to make decisions and also in their day to day operations working with their team members.

The fourth question was on how the lecturers found the MBA courses contributing to EI improvement among the students. Majority of the respondents stated that they were not sure the courses contributed to improving EI skills, they went ahead and explained that in case the students EI skills were developed it was indirectly and may be by chance. But there are no specific efforts in place through the courses that the skill is part of what should be improved, they also pointed out that even in the event that the EI skills were improved the program had no evaluation measures put in place so as to regularly assess and know to what extent there was an improvement. Two of the respondents also pointed out that even the lecturers need to be sensitized about the EI aspect and its importance in the business arena and also be encouraged to instill EI skills to their students as part of the skills they should develop in the course of their teaching.

The fifth question probed for the lecturers' opinion on the efforts that have been put in place through the program to develop, enhance, and test EI skills among the students who go through the MBA course. Majority of the respondents stated that little efforts have been put in place to develop and enhance the students' EI skills, and they stated even these

efforts have not been stated explicitly. One of the respondents responding to this question explained that most people both students and the lecturers are not aware of the EI skills, therefore more needs to be done to create the awareness and even specific efforts been put in place to develop and enhance EI skills. All respondents stated there were no efforts to test the skills, considering there were no units on EI skills development.

Finally the lecturers were asked their opinion on what could be done to include EI skills in the MBA program. Majority of the respondents stated there is a need for the curriculum to have a practical approach to complement the theoretical learning, where soft skills like EI will be tailored in the curriculum and explicitly state them as expected skills to be attained by the students. Another opinion was EI could be also introduced into the curriculum as a unit and taught to all students in the course. Also, through series of workshops and seminars that the students' should participate during the MBA course, which could even have the frequent tests of the EI skills development.

## **5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

From this case study, the CUEA MBA program does not have emotional intelligence as one of the skills it focuses to impact to its MBA students. This is evident from the course description which is the fundamental document that gives a guideline to the lecturers on what to deliver. Since EI skills development is not mentioned as an objective in any course unit, the lecturers have never focused on it. As a result the students' awareness, knowledge, and skills in EI from the MBA Program at best is low. Therefore, we can conclude that if there is any EI skills awareness or knowledge developed among students in the program, it must be the result of lecturers' or students' individual initiative. It may be also possible EI to be mentioned casually, but not purposefully. This is why the majority of CUEA MBA students are not aware of emotional intelligence skills and how important they are to make managers and leaders more competitive and successful. Emotional Intelligence is a business phenomenon of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The CEO of Alibaba Jack Ma on his visit to Kenya did say: "Today's businesses that will stand the rapid changes and remain leaders in their markets are those that embrace emotional intelligence." These businesses can only embrace EI if their leaders' alma mater did inculcate the emotional intelligence skills in them. A review of the leading Management and Business schools around the world the researcher made in this case study has confirmed that emotional intelligence is not a fad in the business world today. These business schools have included emotional intelligence trainings in their MBA programs. Emotional intelligence has been tailored in to the curriculum by having units that explicitly focus on developing all or some of the EI skills. Other schools have developed leadership programs that run parallel to the MBA program mandatory for all the MBA students to attend, all with the objective of developing the EI skills among their MBA students. Some schools have also included seminars on EI and even have follow-up programs on the levels of their MBA students' EI levels as their study.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

The study recommends that CUEA MBA program needs to be incorporated with EI skills development and make it a primary skill to be developed to the students irrespective of their area of specialization. The study further recommends that EI skills should be developed not only at the MBA level, but also among undergraduate students, as suggested by some of the lecturers who participated in this study. The study also recommends that the School of Business needs to consider having leadership trainings, workshops or seminars

that its students can attend and have professional training on emotional intelligence skills before they are done with their MBA studies. Finally, the study recommends that there is a need for more awareness seminars on EI skills to all CUEA stakeholders could also help in further development of the CUEA community as well.

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