

**A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND VIRTUE ETHICS IN ACCOUNTING  
PROFESSIONALS**

by

Jacent R. Gayle

JUDITH L. FORBES, PhD, Faculty Mentor and Chair

THERESA PAVONE, PhD, Committee Member

RICHARD COSTELLO, PhD, Committee Member

Barbara Butts Williams, PhD, Dean, School of Business and Technology

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## Abstract

Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Virtue ethics (VE) are areas of investigation that have in recent years become important in accounting organizations. Research on the relationship between emotional intelligence and virtue ethics in accounting professionals have received thus far, little attention. Therefore, the relationship between emotional intelligence and virtue ethics in the accounting industry is not known. Scholars theorize that a link exists between EI and VE that is important for effective leadership. However, little empirical evidence exists to date to support this claim. The research problem of this study centers on the gap in knowledge that exists pertaining the relationship between EI and VE in accounting professionals. Knowledge of the relationship between EI and VE will be beneficial to accountants, as these soft skills have been reported to be beneficial in other professions by contributing to effective organizational performance. The technical knowledge required to encompass the “soft skills” of accounting professionals in today’s global environment have changed insignificantly since the early 1990s. Accounting professionals are now required to provide other functions such as information facilitation in addition to technical tasks such as bookkeeping, financial analysis, auditing, and tax preparation therefore creating a greater emphasis on utilizing the soft skills of EI and VE. (Key words: Emotional intelligence, virtue ethics and accounting professionals).

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my family for their unwavering love, support, encouragement, and sacrifice. I appreciate my husband Brian for his willingness to share the enumerable sacrifices, and the belief that I could accomplish my goals. To my children, Kereese and Keenan, for your understanding, support, love, and constant reminders to take a break: to go watch a movie, to talk a walk, and take vacations, helped more than you may ever know. I hope that by watching and participating in my journey you gained positive energy and insights for your academic success. To my grandmother, who has passed on to the other side. Thank you for instilling in me the importance of higher education, the tenacity to see it through, and all the love and support you have given me while you were here. To all my at Capella family including Dr. Ola Jobi, Lorna Thomas, Esther Lambert, Faye Garrett, Joetta Malone – I could not have completed this without your help. The countless hours spent on the phone encouraging me when I wanted to give up the journey.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

### Introduction to the Problem

Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Virtue ethics (VE) are areas of investigation that have in recent years become important in accounting organizations (Bay & McKeage, 2006; Singh, 2011). Research on the relationship between emotional intelligence and virtue ethics in accounting professionals has received, thus far, little attention. Therefore, the relationship between emotional intelligence and virtue ethics in the accounting industry is not known. Scholars theorize that a link exists between EI and VE that is important for effective leadership (Angelidis & Ibrahim, 2011; Bay & Greenberg, 2001; Holian 2006; Maak & Pless, 2006; McPhail, 2004). However, little empirical evidence exists to date to support this claim. The research problem of this study centers on the gap in knowledge that exists pertaining to the relationship between EI and VE in accounting professionals. Knowledge of the relationship between EI and VE will be beneficial to accountants, as these soft skills have been reported to be beneficial in other professions by contributing to effective organizational performance (Cook, Bay, Visser, Myburgh & Njoroge, 2011; McPhail, 2004). As accounting professionals have numerous interactions with clients day after day, having knowledge of the uniqueness of EI and VE can be useful. This is evident when customers who believe they are treated fairly and feel respected will always want to do business with these accounting organizations (Shergold, 2006). Knowledge of what types of individuals to hire based on their EI and VE skills is necessary for organizations to properly place these individuals in positions that are best suited for them.

A current problem appears to be a lower level of EI and VE within the accounting profession manifested through the negative attitude towards emotion. For example, accountants show little scope for emotions since they are committed to objectivity and representational faithfulness (McPhail, 2004). This study specifically sought to understand EI and its correlation with VE in accounting professionals. According to Manna, Bryan and Pastoria (2009) future research is required to determine the levels of EI and VE of practicing accountants and how higher levels of EI and VE may impact the careers of those with these capabilities. Organizations need to know how to assess an accounting candidate's performance skills, and how the relationship of EI and VE contribute to effective organizational performance.

### **Background of the Study**

EI is a set of skills, competencies, and non-cognitive capabilities that assist persons to be triumphant in coping with societal burdens, pressures, client relationships, and decision-making (Bar-On, 2004; Bay & McKeage, 2006). Bar-On's representation of emotional intelligence called the EQ-i instrument includes five major composites including intrapersonal composites, interpersonal composites, adaptability composites, stress management composites, and general mood composites. Within each of these composites are particular skills that are connected to individual accomplishment. Intrapersonal composites include emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, and independence (Bar-On, 2004). Interpersonal composites comprise of interpersonal relationships, social responsibility, and empathy (Bar-On, 2004). Adaptability composites consist of problem solving, reality testing, and flexibility (Bar-

On, 2004). Stress management composites indicate stress tolerance and impulse control (Bar-On, 2004). General mood composites involve happiness and optimism (Bar-On, 2004). EI is an emergent topic within psychosomatic, instructive, and organizational research (Wong & Law, 2002).

A growing interest in EI and VE indicates that these are crucial for personal and business relationships (McPhail, 2004). Accounting is different in this respect from any other management discipline because a lack of EI in accounting that emphasizes technical skills and neglects the competencies that address people skills (Smigla & Pastoria, 2000). Accountants have an affinity for factual information, numerical data, deliberate decision-making processes and avoid important people skills (Smigla & Pastoria, 2000). Bay and McKeage (2006) contend that emotional intelligence is a skill that is important for accountants to successfully perform in leadership, customer service, and effective decision-making. The accounting profession needs to involve the intuitive dimensions of emotional intelligence, since this is likely to be a great source of competitive advantage. Emotional intelligence and virtue ethics are important for the accounting profession, as the ultimate goal is to satisfy both internal and external customers in order to increase productivity and profits for organizations. Customers who believe they are treated fairly and feel respected will always want to do business with these accounting organizations. The importance of feelings and intuition that is evident in emotional intelligence also extends to moral consideration. The ethical dimension of EI focuses on others rather than self; it emphasizes relationships and the way others are treated (Shergold, 2006). The study of ethics is about human relationships. It is about true or untrue and moral or immoral actions. Individuals need to cultivate the right emotions to reinforce virtue ethics

(De Colle & Werhane, 2008). VE concerns the creditworthiness of an individual's actions, the ethical goodness of character and practical wisdom in decision- making (Audi, 2012). Consequently, virtue ethics can guide the actions of individuals, clarify moral dilemmas, and bring out the moral importance of the emotions.

As accounting organizations comprehend and accept the advantages of well-defined interaction, honesty, and the prominence of unquestioning affiliations in business, they will attain improved achievement. Surendra (2010) explained that the development of EI was so that individuals could feel the right emotions toward the right individuals to function well as a moral and social being. For accounting bodies serious about engaging, choosing, employing and developing their human capital, it is crucial that emotional intelligence and virtue ethics be acknowledged and assimilated to help improve cognitive functioning. Accounting managers need to know how to perceive their staffs and potential new employees. A knowledge of what types of individuals to hire based on EI skills, virtue ethical characteristics and what positions will be better suited for these individuals based on these skills is necessary. A current problem appears to be a lower level of EI and VE within the accounting profession manifested through the negative attitude towards emotion. For example, accountants show little scope for emotions since they are committed to objectivity and representational faithfulness (McPhail, 2004). Research on the relationship between EI and VE has received, thus far, little attention. The research problem of this study centers on the gap in knowledge that exists pertaining to the measurement and strength of emotional intelligence and the relationship to virtue ethics within accounting organizations.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The research problem of this study was centered on the gap in knowledge that existed pertaining to the relationship between EI and VE in accounting professionals. The relationship between EI and VE in the accounting industry is not known. Ignoring the role of EI and VE could affect the effectiveness of accounting organizations. McPhail (2004) posited that accountants show little scope for emotions since they are committed to objectivity and representational faithfulness. However, since accounting professionals deal with clients on a daily basis, possessing and utilizing the capabilities of EI and VE could be helpful for effective organizational performance.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this correlational quantitative study was to assess the relationship between EI and VE found in accounting professionals. Emotional intelligence and virtue ethics researchers have used quantitative, positivist techniques, such as surveys to quantify these constructs (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006). This quantitative, correlational study used a survey to evaluate the observed variables that were the questions from the questionnaire. This knowledge is essential for scholars and accounting organizations, as it could transform the manner in which they develop strategic business initiatives. In addition it aimed to contribute to closing a research gap in knowledge pertaining to the relationship between EI and VE.

## **Rationale**

EI and VE have become major subjects of importance for accounting organizational leaders. A tremendous amount of research on EI and VE exists, but not in the accounting industry. Accounting is different from other management disciplines in that accounting emphasizes technical skills and neglects the competencies that address people skills (Smigla & Pastoria, 2000). EI and VE play large roles in organizational success in other disciplines so these skills may permit accounting professionals to improve in areas such as leadership, team building, client relations, and decision-making (Cook et al., 2011; Singh, 2011).

## **Research Questions**

The following questions were used to guide the study.

To what extent are EI and VE related in accounting professionals as measured by the EQ-i and EEQ instruments?

RQ1: To what extent is the intrapersonal dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

RQ2: To what extent is the interpersonal dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

RQ3: To what extent is the stress management dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

RQ4: To what extent is the adaptability dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

RQ5: To what extent is the general mood dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

### **Significance of the Study**

Emotional Intelligence and virtue ethics have become major subjects of importance for accounting organizational leaders. A tremendous amount of research on EI and VE exists, but not in the accounting industry. According to Cook et al. (2011) and Libby and Thorne (2007) EI and VE perform an enormous responsibility in organizational attainment in other disciplines so these skills may allow accountants to perform better in a variety of areas such as leadership, team building, client expectations and decision-making. This study is significant to the accounting field as it contributes to closing a research gap in knowledge pertaining to the relationship that may exist between the measurement of the EI components and VE. Upon conclusion of this study, accounting businesses can be in a superior position to expand strategically regarding recruiting, educating in avenues such as management, client relationships, and decision-making. This would add to the literature on whether EI and VE tests could help human resources hire more qualified accounting professionals. The outcome of this research may perhaps also attach to the increasing body of research pertaining to EI and VE and its relevance to strategic corporate enterprises.

### **Definition of Terms**

#### **Operational Definitions and Key Terms**

**Accounting:** The process of identifying, measuring, and communicating economic

information to in order to make informed decisions by various users (Porter and Norton, 2011).

**Intrapersonal** – Self-awareness and self-expression (Bar-On, 2005).

**Self-Regard** – To truthfully recognize, comprehend, and accept one’s self (Bar-On, 2005).

**Emotional Self-Awareness** – To be aware and connect with one’s feelings (Singh, 2010).

**Assertiveness** - To effectively and constructively express one’s emotions and oneself (Bar-On, 2005).

**Independence** –To be self-reliant and free of emotional reliance on others (Bar-On, 2005).

**Self-Actualization** –To strive to achieve respective goals and actualize one’s potential (Bar-On, 2005).

**Interpersonal** – Social awareness and interpersonal relationship (Bar-On, 2005).

**Empathy**: To be aware of and understand how others feel (Bar-On, 2005).

**Social Responsibility**: To identify with one’s social group and cooperate with others (Bar-On, 2005).

**Interpersonal Relationship**: To establish mutually satisfying relationships and relating well with others (Bar-On, 2005).

**Stress Management** – The ability to regulate one’s emotions when required (Singh, 2010).

**Stress Tolerance** –To effectively and practically manage emotions in adverse situations (Singh, 2010).

**Impulse Control** – To meritoriously and productively control emotions (Bar-On, 2005).

**Adaptability** – Change management (Bar-On, 2005).

**Reality Testing** – To impartially authenticate one’s feeling and thinking with external reality (Bar-On, 2005).

**Flexibility** - To adapt and adjust one’s feeling and thinking to new situations (Bar-On, 2005).

**Problem Solving** – To effectually solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature (Bar-On, 2005).

**General Mood** –Self-motivation (Bar-On, 2005).

**Optimism** – To be positive and look at the brighter side of life (Bar-On, 2005).

**Happiness**– To feel content with oneself, others and life in general (Bar-On, 2005).

**Accounting professionals** are professionals who use financial information to communicate to decision makers. They include tax accountants, auditors, management accountants, CPAs, general ledger accountants, and financial accountants (Porter & Norton, 2011).

**Emotional Intelligence (EI)** is a set of capabilities, competencies, and non-cognitive capabilities that assists individuals in coping with community demands, pressures, client relationships, and decision-making (Bar-on, 2004; Bay & Mckeage, 2006).

**Virtue ethics (VE)** is the standard of human conduct that governs the behavior of individuals, character traits, human happiness, practical wisdom, and evaluation of the emotions (Surendra, 2010).

## **Assumptions and Limitations**

In every research study the assumptions should be carefully noted. These assumptions are based on inferences made about a population and based on evidence gathered from a sample. This study looked at theoretical, topical, methodological, and statistical assumptions to evaluate the relationship between EI and VE in accounting professionals. These assumptions gave rise to a system known as reductionism in which the parts all work together to achieve an understanding of the whole. According to Jackson (2003), the whole emerges from the interactions between the parts, which affect each other through complex networks of relationships.

### **Theoretical assumptions**

Because Singh's (2011) conceptualization of the dimensions of emotional intelligence and McDaniel's (1997) ethics environment model, grounded in Albert Bandura's (2007) theory of Social Cognitive Theory and Aristotle's Virtue ethics theory (1999 version) guide this study and define the constructs it investigates, it is assumed that the characteristics for EI and VE to exist and to be measured at the individual, work unit and organizations levels are rooted in social systems.

### **Topical Assumptions**

An assumption was that additional research is required to study the relationship between EI and VE in accounting professionals (Angelidis & Ibrahim, 2011; Greenberg, 2001; Holian 2006; Maak & Pless, 2006; McPhail, 2004). Topical assumptions provide an explanation for the relationship among variables being tested by the researcher. The researcher began the study by researching topics from related literature on the topic. A

search showed the results of other studies that were closely related to the one being undertaken. Based on these results a topical assumption could be made.

### **Methodological Assumptions**

The method and design of this research was most appropriate for a quantitative study of the dimensions of EI and their relationships to VE in accounting professionals (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). In planning a quantitative study on EI and VE the researcher utilized positivism to assume an objective philosophical worldview, which searched for facts conceived in terms of correlations among variables (Holden & Lynch, 2004). This theoretical worldview also required the investigator to scrutinize the central assumptions of the essentials of humanity and the essentials of knowledge to conduct the study (Holden & Lynch, 2004).

### **Statistical Assumptions**

In order for the test statistic to be valid the sampling distribution had to be normally distributed, the data should be considered at least at the interval level, the variables should be linear and normality for the test of hypotheses should hold true. The assumption of a linear relationship between the dimensions of EI and VE was checked by creating a scatter plot using SPSS to ascertain if the points on the cluster around a straight line. Normality for the test of hypotheses assumed that the sample data and sampling distribution are normal (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). From the central limit theorem large samples tend to be normal. In this study the sample size is 208. Statistical significance is the degree to which the data contradict the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis was rejected if the sample data were different from what they would be if the null hypothesis were true. The test was significant ( $p < .05$ ) when the sample distribution

was significantly different from a normal distribution and it was not significant ( $p > .05$ ) when the sample distribution was not significantly different from a normal distribution.

### **Limitations**

Quantitative research studies have limitations since they are deficient in exploratory elements such as interviews, focus groups, record analysis, and kinesics (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). Consequently, being impartial and avoiding bias preferences provided more reliable and valid investigative studies. An array of instruments is used to test emotional and ethics and they still seem to be evolving. Researchers have been debating as to how these constructs can be measured effectively. According to Salovey and Grewal (2005) one of the biggest challenges is deciphering which measurement instruments properly influence the application of emotional-related skills because of differences in the temperament of individuals.

One limitation in this study was the use of the self-reported EI score. Future research could be more advantageous with using other units of analysis such as leaders to see the difference (Labbaaf, Ansari, & Masoudi, 2011). Another, limitation of the study was that it does not fragment the sample by industry to conclude any effects appropriate to industry or company size. Also, the research did not embrace samples from external to the United States. In light of rising company globalization, prospective research may desire to incorporate a worldwide sample as well as examine for any differences between the countries. Other limitations included potentially inconsistent administering of the assessments, bias and the potential for research participants to drop out the study due to workload.

### **Strengths**

Specific strengths of this study were the time and money saved in utilizing Survey Monkey to administer the collection of the data. Also, the data collection instruments validity and reliability; and the instruments alignment with the constructs added strength to this study. Participants were situated geographically across the United States, not just in determined areas (Morehouse, 2007). The strength of the design was the use of a quantitative correlational research design to relate the variables rather than manipulate them.

### **Nature of the Study**

EI and VE have become major subjects of importance for accounting organizational leaders. According to Leban and Zulauf (2004), organizational leaders need to understand the emotions of stakeholders as this determines the best strategies for creating organizational success. In the same vein, emotional intelligence is also important to accounting professionals for creating organizational success and to achieve competitive advantage. Miles and Huberman (1994) speculated that a theoretical structure is an iterative procedure used to illustrate graphics or descriptive style. The objective of this study was to develop a theoretical framework to identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and virtue ethics in accounting professionals.

This study considered Bar-On's emotional intelligence tool that encompasses five dimensions with a collection of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and abilities that influences human behavior (Bar-On, 1997; Singh, 2011). The framework consists of

five dimensions of intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management and general mood. In addition, virtue ethics is a part of this framework. The significance of this notional structure assisted the investigator to devise the research questions and construct the basis of the quantitative study. The research questions were also central in a study on EI and VE.

This study was guided by the emotional intelligence and virtue ethics constructs. This study is significant to the accounting field as it contributes to the body of knowledge topics pertaining to the measurement of the EI components, as well as the relationship of the EI components to virtue ethics. This is important to accounting organizations, as emotional intelligence and virtue ethics are characteristics that permit accounting professionals to perform better in a diversity of fields such as leadership, customer relations and decision-making. Also, the knowledge of what types of individuals to hire based on emotional intelligence skills; virtue ethical characteristics and what positions are better suited for these individuals based on these skills are necessary.

In this theoretical framework the dimensions of EI and VE are variables used in this correlational study. The model proposed that these two variables were related as virtue ethics evolves and prospers in an accounting environment where emotional intelligence is seen as a dominant characteristic among accounting professionals. Figure 1 illustrated the conceptual framework.

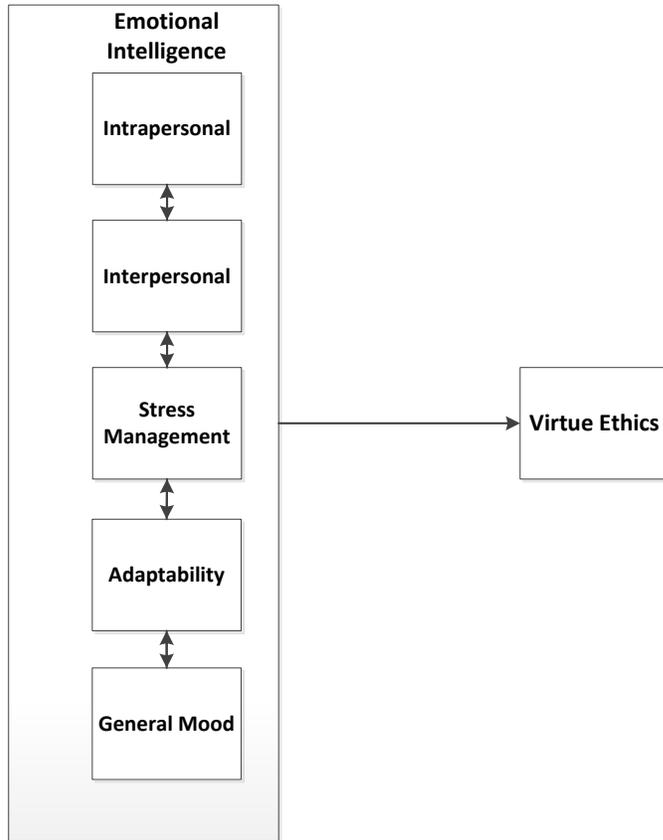


Figure 1. Conceptual construct model (framework)

## Emotional Intelligence

The constructs measured fifteen characteristics of emotional intelligence grouped into five dimensions (Colfax, Rivera, & Perez, 2010).

### 1. Intrapersonal dimension

- a. Self-regard
- b. Emotional self-awareness
- c. Assertiveness
- d. Independence
- e. Self-actualization

## **2. Interpersonal dimension**

- a. Empathy
- b. Social responsibility
- c. Interpersonal relationship

## **3. Stress management dimension**

- a. Stress tolerance
- b. Impulse control

## **4. Adaptability dimension**

- a. Reality testing
- b. Flexibility
- c. Problem solving

## **5. General mood dimension**

- a. Optimism
- b. Happiness

### **Virtue ethics**

This construct was developed from Charlotte McDaniel (1997) model of ethics. Within this construct virtue ethics was assessed to ascertain how moral individuals behave and how they become moral which is conducive for businesses to be successful. According to Audi (2012), “doing the right thing for the wrong reason brings us no moral credit; and treating people well in order to manipulate them later does not bespeak good character.” (p. 279).

## **Organization of the Remainder of the Study**

Following Chapter 1's introduction to the research study, Chapter 2 examines the history of EI, the theoretical foundation of EI, the history of VE, the measurement of EI in organizations, the accounting industry, the development of EI, the potential link between EI and VE, and the evolving role of the accounting profession. Chapter 3 describes the research design, the population and sample, sampling procedures, sample size, rationale for the quantitative approach design, the variables, relationship among variables, instrumentation, validity and reliability, ethical considerations, data collection process, data analysis, expected outcomes, anticipated findings, and implications. Chapter 4 discusses findings and theories recognized throughout the conclusion and examination of the quantitative research. Chapter 5 concludes the research by presenting research findings, limitations, implications for accounting organizations, and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter analyzes and synthesizes the recent literature regarding emotional intelligence (EI) and virtue ethics (VE). This chapter is divided into subsections such as emotional intelligence overview, virtue ethics overview, measurement of EI in organizations, developing EI, EI and its potential relationship to VE, the accounting industry, and the evolving role of the accounting professional. After each discussion, a subsequent dialogue and justification regarding why these sections are pertinent to this research study were presented.

EI and VE have developed into a main topic of value for organizational leaders. The literature review mentions that the capacity to comprehend and manage emotions is identified as EI (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). VE on the other hand, concerns the creditworthiness of an individual's actions, the ethical goodness of character and practical wisdom in decision-making (Audi, 2012). Organizations require these abilities for accomplishment in their organizations. Further, as transformation is a major attribute of existence in an accounting business and work-life places more stress on a person's cognitive, and non-cognitive competencies, EI and VE abilities will become more imperative. An evaluation and investigation of the academic literature within the past five years highlights the meaning of EI and VE for organizational leaders. In addition, the researcher evaluated and examined how the emotional intelligence and virtue ethics of leaders are measured, assessed, and applied within an accounting organizational background. The history of EI is an excellent place to commence the dialogue. This chapter gives an in-depth evaluation of the current literature related to the purpose of the

research and the research questions. The chapter is separated into eight distinct sections. The first section looks at the history of EI. The second section looks at the theory of VE, key theorists involved in the development of VE theory, VE assessment, and VE as a construct. The third and fourth sections comprehensively examine the theory of EI, key theorists involved in the development of EI theory, emotional intelligence assessment, and EI as a construct. The fifth section looks at the potential relationship between EI and VE. The sixth and seventh sections look at the accounting industry and the evolving role of the accounting profession. The final section concludes with a summary of Chapter 2.

### **Emotional Intelligence Overview**

Scholars have been researching this novel area of concern as of the commencement of the twentieth century; however the notable roots stem back from the nineteenth century (Bar-On, 2005). Several of the premature studies on emotional topics started with Edward Thorndike who established social intelligence in 1920 to understand a person's capacity to comprehend and control others (Corona, 2010). Edgar Doll in 1935 promulgated the first tool to determine social intelligence in children (Bar-On, 2005). In addition, Wechsler in 1943 described the persuasion of non-intellective essentials on intellectual conduct (Khosravi, Manafi, Hojabri, Aghapour, & Gheshmi, 2011). Gardner (1983) soon after anticipated an intelligence supposition encompassing intrapersonal and interpersonal aptitudes beside others that served as the groundwork of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence has grown to be accepted in organizations since the publication of Goleman's book on emotional intelligence in 1995. Researchers such as Cherniss and Adler (2000) adumbrated in topics associated to non-intellective (personal

and social elements) as well as intellectual factors of intelligence. Another scholar, Robert Sternberg (1985) studied theories supporting the premise that intelligence is an ability to adapt to an individual's surroundings and make sound decisions.

The lessons on emotional intelligence grew over time with diverse approaches of measuring emotional intelligence. The term "EI" finally came to life when coined by Mayor and Salovey who fashioned an aptitude model to exemplify emotional intelligence as a person's power to decipher problems utilizing emotions (Corona, 2010). In addition, Bar-On's trait model focused on personality factors to explain emotional intelligence skills (Bar-On, 2005).

Within the precedent 30 years research investigating factors that add to success in organizations have resulted in unique factors that are associated to emotional intelligence. These researches utilized quantified statistics on performance from innumerable companies and industries and have contributed to the information base in emotional intelligence (Flynn, 2008; Landy, 2005). Besides, the 1990s showed growing awareness on the part of scholars and practitioners on the construct of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics. This attention reflects the speculative suggestion that persons who are high in emotional intelligence are ostensibly more victorious in job-related and non-work aspects of life than low-emotionally intellectual ones.

A paucity of studies on the impact of EI is entrenched in the scholarly literature. For example, George (2000) posited that the capacity of a manager to recognize his own or his cohorts' emotions is a considerable ingredient in management. In addition, emotional intelligence determines who ultimately emerges as a manager and encompasses skills such as social skills, self-awareness, self-motivation, self-

management, and empathy (Goleman, 1995). Furthermore, Individuals with high levels of EI demonstrated higher levels of happiness, career success, healthier life styles and the ability to handle stressful events in their lives. These ideas are shared theoretically with the views of Epstein (1998), Nelson and Low (1999), Goleman (1995) and other researchers who study the construct of EI.

Emotional intelligence is an emergent focus within psychosomatic, instructive, and administrative research (Wong & Law, 2002). Goleman (1995) proposed that emotional intelligence involves abilities categorized as knowledge of self, management of emotions, self- motivation, empathy, and supervision of relationships. Emotional intelligence is the ability to comprehend meanings associated to definite thoughts, to reason, and to craft decisions as a consequence of them (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999). In addition, Mayer and Salovey (1997) asserted that emotional intelligence consists of four abilities (1) to understand one's own emotions and demonstrate these emotions logically, (2) to observe and realize the emotions of other persons, (3) to manage one's emotions, and (4) to use one's emotions by adapting them toward dynamic performance.

Much debate conducted by researchers concerning the significance of cognitive abilities rather than emotional intelligence for quantifying the accomplishment of leaders in an organization has been located in the literature. Chreniss, Extein, Goleman, and Weissberg (2006) contended that research illustrates that cognitive abilities explain less than 9% of the disparity in management achievement. Additional research by Goleman recommended that the flexible skills of emotional intelligence are more important than the cognitive skills displayed in acme leaders (Chreniss et al., 2006).

The present study defined the emotional intelligence construct with the help of the following dimensions: intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability, and general mood composites. The following is a detailed description of each component within the Bar-On 2005 model as described by Singh (2011) and Stein and Book (2006). The five composites describe the traits that individuals should possess as he or she evaluates their ability when the test is administered.

*The intrapersonal composite* is the competence to understand one self and apply it effectively to life situations (Carmeli & Josman, 2006). This dimension includes self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence and self-actualization. These capabilities as described by Singh (2011) allow an individual to be in connection with the emotions, feel good about him or herself and are able to attain goals.

*The interpersonal composite* is the competence to understand social awareness and interpersonal relationship areas of emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 2005). This dimension includes empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationship. These capabilities according to Singh (2011) allow the connection between individuals in which they are able to express feelings of care or feelings of vulnerability.

*The stress management composite* is the competence to understand emotional management and regulation (Bar-On, 2005). This dimension concerns the abilities to effectively and constructively manage and control emotions. Singh (2011) posited that the ability to regulate and management this dimension is significant in assisting individuals accept and find strategies to manage emotions depending on the circumstances.

*The adaptability composite* is the competence that concerns change management. The skills utilized in this dimension include: reality testing, flexibility, and problem solving (Bar-On, 2005). This dimension is concerned with individuals taking responsibility for their actions and being able to solve problems effectively (Singh, 2011)

*The general mood composite* is defined as self-motivation. The skills evaluated include optimism and happiness. This dimension is concerned with the capacity to look at the brighter side of life and retain an optimistic position even in the face of difficulty (Singh, 2011). Virtue ethics is another characteristic that was investigated in this quantitative study.

### **Virtue Ethics Overview**

The significance of ethics has been studied by Greek, Roman and modern philosophers. The foundation came from the Greek expression, *ethicos* that means routine customs linked to morals (Ezizma, 2010). Hartman (2008, p. 314) also contended that Aristotle described "ethics as the art of living well" and Socrates posited that "ethics is about improving one's soul; the best reason for being ethical is that it makes one's soul better and makes one a happier person than otherwise." Another attractive approach to explain ethics is that persons should assess and consider what is precious and negative and avoid ecstasy that is capable of bodily harm and emotional anguish (Hartman, 2008). Virtue ethics applies a similar ethical policy to actions concerning any area of commerce (Forsyth, 1980).

In the literature review numerous investigators dispute that virtue ethics concerns communal standards and morals is about individual principles, but several employ the

idiom interchangeably. The study of ethics in business serves as a significant doctrine because it brings out different aspects of how people are treated in industry. Paine (1994) asserted that ethics has all to do with organizational management. In addition, dishonest managerial behaviors entail the support of persons, reflects the attitudes, philosophy, thoughts, and performance patterns that profile an organization's business environment (Paine, 1994).

According to Venezia (2008) virtue ethics dates back the ancient Greek thinkers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle and is the oldest type of ethical theory in the establishment of western philosophy. Their ethics are founded on the understanding and selection of the superior possessions in life. The history of virtue ethics dates back to Aristotle in his famous work *Nichomachean Ethics* in which he believed that individuals that attain good quality practices are capable of regulating their emotions and their reasoning. This ultimately helps individuals achieve honorably acceptable decisions when faced with difficult choices. Aristotle stated that ethical deeds are preferences consequential to motives boarder than egotism. Aristotle (1998 version) thought that moral dealings are anticipated to create outcomes that have excellence as the thrust. The quest for excellence to promote oneself is an expected tendency of a human being but looking for excellence for others is a noble and considerable quality. This is what makes a person “virtuous” (p.2). Virtue ethics forms temperament and guides the selection with an admiration for the cost of the selection.

Aristotle also mentioned that humans strive towards pleasure and accomplishment in life. Although pleasure means diverse things to unusual people, this trait can help an individual achieve ultimate goals. According to Aristotle the development of the spirit

informs interpretation to disconnect those in search of physical pleasure from those looking for shared or meditative happiness (Aristotle, 1998 version). In addition, Aristotle argued that moral duty executed by individuals comes from having commitment to virtue ethics and striving for excellence where precision, fairness, audacity, munificence, admiration and amity; tempered with willpower are at its center (Aristotle, 1998 version). Consequently, virtue ethics can guide the actions of individuals, clarify moral dilemmas, and bring out the importance of the emotions.

The ethics based on the evaluations of the moral disposition of individuals is virtue ethics (Velasquez, 2006, p.60). According to Velasquez (2006, p.110) moral virtue is an acquired temperament esteemed as an ingredient of the nature of a morally excellent individual exhibited in the individual's habitual behavior. Therefore, virtue ethics is more focused on helping individuals develop good character traits. Virtue ethics is probably the most known theory to the accounting profession because the Code of Profession Conduct (CPC) was created from the idea of 'virtues'. This is so because the CPC emphasizes the vital role-played by motives in moral questions. For example, this theory requires an accountant to ask questions such as "What makes a prudent business person or what makes a good individual? Or is loyalty a virtue an accountant should achieve" (Koehn, 2005, p.524)? Virtue ethics also refers to anything that portrays superiority that exercises sound moral decisions guided by such 'virtues' as audacity, acumen, self-control, justice, veracity, and uniformity (Dubois, 2007). These character traits will then allow the individual to make accurate and truthful decisions during life.

Moral responsibility executed by a person adopting virtue considers selections relative to achieving excellence (Aristotle, 1998 version). The action over the life of an

individual does not make one noble. Instead nobleness is achieved from a lifetime of commitment to virtue. Virtue aims at synchronization and avoids elements that are counterfeit and strives at acquiring excellence within the spirit where precision, fairness, audacity, kindness, reverence and camaraderie are tempered with self-discipline (Aristotle, 1998 version). These are all traits of virtue. Since accounting professionals provide useful information for the public to make important financial decisions they display the characteristics of virtue ethics as they have a serious responsibility to provide information that is truthful, reliable and representational faithful.

The AICPA and the SEC have policed the accounting profession in the United States for over fifty years. Since 2000, corporate scandals have led some of the largest corporations into bankruptcy. The involvement of the auditors in the Enron and WorldCom scandals has been the most significant in more than 20 years. Congress in 2002 passed the Sarbanes-Oxley Act to find an immediate solution and restore public confidence by bringing about accountability and stewardship in accounting and big business (Porter & Norton, 2011). A breakdown in virtue ethics that was necessary for sustaining business societies occurred. The corporate scandals coupled with the ongoing global economic crisis of the last few years have placed accounting professionals in the spotlight. Accounting professionals have the responsibility to portray an aura of excellence by communicating openly and truthfully to the public, concerning the financial affairs of their businesses. Accounting plays a crucial role in the smooth functioning of business organizations.

## Measurement of Emotional Intelligence in Organizations

The scholarly research with the last five years depicts numerous ways to determine EI. The accepted procedures acknowledged in the research are Goleman's emotional competency intelligence (ECI) models, Mayer-Salovey-Caruso emotional intelligence test (MSCEIT), and Bar-On emotional quotient inventory (EQ-i) (Boyatzis, 2009). The self-report is the mainly widespread means to quantify character behavior. The aptitude evaluation is utilized to estimate people skills and peripheral sources of information obtained from other persons with whom the participants work to gather peer-reviewed results. The statistics from self-reports and observer reports also unite to form a 360-degree measurement.

The self-report tool which is the oldest measurement apparatus is the Bar-On, which exists from a scientific position instead of a professional one (Bar-On, 1997). The rationale for the preparation was to permit persons to attain individual distinctiveness that shaped more emotional welfare. Bar-On (1997) stated that little is identified about legitimacy in labor environments, but a lot is recognized concerning its discriminant, convergent, and reliability factors. The United States Air Force utilized the EQ-i apparatus which was victorious for recruiting persons and saving three million dollars yearly by utilizing the examination to select recruiters (Bar-On, 1997).

Another well-liked dimensional apparatus utilized to progress EI in business leadership is the Mayer and Salovey device. The MSCEIT examines aptitude as a substitute to self-reporting that focuses on the four areas of the Mayer and Salovey (1997) tool: attentiveness, controlling the supervision of emotions, comprehending difficult emotions, assessing thoughts , and thinking with the emotions (McEnrue & Groves,

2006). The investigator conducted steps intended to check the person's power to identify, distinguish, and work with thoughts. The MSCEIT instrument demonstrates well-built psychometric properties, as well as discriminant, construct, convergent, and prognostic validity compared to additional EI procedures (McEnrue & Groves, 2006).

A third representation is the ECI device. EI measures are normally in terms of thoughts and behavioral tendencies. The ECI is a 360-degree all-around evaluation of EI abilities. The self-test survey established by Boyatzis more than 40% of the essential from an older apparatus (Boyatzis, 1994). Numerous EI studies of individuals in administration from diverse countries confirm against these former objects (Boyatzis, 1994). The ECI utilizes an EI structure for recognizing the thoughts of others, of self, for organizing those emotions and encouraging them (Goleman, 1998). In addition the ECI is a set of connected skills, attitudes, behaviors, aptitude, data, and procedures. Moreover, the ECI measures alongside conventional principles, links with performance on-the-job, and improves instruction and growth (Goleman, 1998). The ECI 360 contains four EI categories that highlight understanding of self, supervision of self, knowledge of the social environment, and associations (Turner & Lloyd-Walker, 2008). This structure is significant to evaluate EI in organizations and is summarized in Table1.

Table 1. ECI 360 Cluster Descriptions

Category	Abilities included
Awareness of self	Emotional consciousness: recognizing own emotions and their consequence self-test: knowing strong points and weaknesses Self-confidence: knowing self-worth and abilities
Management of character	Self-discipline: maintaining quiet and being sober under pressure Clearness: loyally opening to the position of others flexibility: alter easily with change Attainment: set possible goals and always in search of improvement Inventiveness: grasp opportunities rather than linger Confidence: rolls with the punches and sees the glass as half-full
Awareness of social environment	Compassion: known to emotional signals. good listener, able to get along well with a various set of citizens Managerial consciousness: politically astute Examination: check consumer or patron fulfillment warily, extremely available to the customer
Management of relationships	Stimulation: inspire and set personality; represent what they ask of others Persuade: skillful in authority Developing others: a ordinary mentor or teacher Transform device: know the want for and strong supporter for transformation Disagreement administration: able to draw parties mutually, recognize all perspectives and recognize general view Collaboration and group effort: dedicated to the combined outcome, group spirit, and uniqueness

These studies share a common goal, which is to show the value of emotional intelligence in the hope that companies will implement and utilize emotional intelligence competencies. A review of the literature has discovered that the significance of EI has revealed itself in numerous traditions, such as economics, leadership expansion, and managerial backgrounds. Confirmation is accumulating on the fact that EI can be very strategic and good for organizational success. Despite the mechanism, the results of the research in which they were used have shown significant answers in providing consistent and legitimate statistics regarding the impact of EI.

## **Developing Emotional Intelligence**

Some theorists believe emotional intelligence can be learned and developed.

Brown, George-Curran and Smith (2003) asserted that emotional intelligence could be taught and learned. If emotional intelligence can be taught and studied, clients can be helped to deal with work adjustment issues and career decision-making difficulties.

Emmerling and Cherniss (2003) put forward the idea that those lower in EI may benefit from techniques that encourage them to work with those emotions that present problems in making career choices. Di Fabio and Palazzeschi (2009) viewed emotional intelligence as malleable, able to be improved through training. Stein and Book (2006) viewed emotional intelligence competencies as mutable skills, capable of being improved through appropriate learning interventions. Liptak (2005) also posited that emotional intelligence is a set of abilities and therefore, amenable to training and learning. Zeidner, Roberts and Matthews (2008) evaluated a number of studies and discovered that training programs to enhance emotional intelligence provided practical strategies to help people in many real life situations.

While some question the EI construct or the extent to which EI can be developed, more researchers appear to have embraced EI and have demonstrated ways to improve EI. When considering potential interventions to increase emotional intelligence, any methodical effort to report the genesis and growth of emotional competencies requires the consideration of several factors, including hereditary, unpredictable, ecological, and instructive variables interacting in multifaceted and vibrant traditions (Zeidner, Roberts & Matthew, 2001, p. 219). As asserted by Zeidner et al. (2001), any remedial actions will have to include activities, which are tailored to the unique needs and circumstances of the

individual client such as, emotional competencies may imitate developmental changes as well as the special effects of purposeful socialized systems (Zeidner et al., 2001, p. 219).

### **Emotional Intelligence and its Potential Relationship to Virtue Ethics**

Even though the literature on researching emotional intelligence and virtue ethics was not large, it did afford a foundation for reviewing the relationship linking emotional intelligence and virtue ethics. The research in this locale posits that this association may help professionals combine emotional intelligence capabilities into virtue ethics to guide their action and behavior in interaction (Maak & Pless, 2006; McPhail, 2004; Singh, 2011).

A study by Singh (2011) displayed the resemblance between emotional intelligence and virtue ethics as a way of further illuminating that these abilities and aptitudes assist an individual adapt in and manage the work environment with enhanced capabilities and ethical standards. The study proposed that emotional intelligence has five main dimensions: (a) intrapersonal is self-awareness; (b) interpersonal is empathy and social responsibility; (c) stress management is emotional management and regulation (d) adaptability is change management; and (e) general mood is self-motivation. The research wanted to demonstrate a link between the five emotional intelligence composites and virtue ethics by illustrating how the proposed emotional intelligence constructs mapped to virtue ethics attributes. The study mapped: (a) the intrapersonal composite of self-awareness that an individual is conscious and connected to his/her feelings and actions to Aristotle's (1998 version) belief that ethical events are proposed to create outcomes that have excellence as the thrust. Looking for excellence to benefit oneself is a

normal tendency of a person but looking for excellence for others is a noble and considerable quality. This is what makes a person virtuous (p.2). Virtue ethics builds temperament and directs selections with an admiration for the penalties of the selections. MacIntyre (1984) argued that virtue ethics is attained when one is aware of one's emotions and is able to hold them in abeyance for the purpose of fulfilling one's telos.

The interpersonal composite of EI is social awareness and interpersonal relationship was mapped *to* the virtue ethics component for appreciating others where this seems to extend across individuals of an organization in the interest of some common good to facilitate moral reasoning (Aristotle, 1998 version). MacIntyre (1984) also posited that virtue ethics entails the cultivation of the individual's emotions in a shared community that emphasizes justice, courage, and honesty. This relationship between EI and VE could promote moral sensitivity in individuals. Culham and Bai (2011) argued that EI and VE should not be treated as individual traits, but should be constructed out of long-term socialization processes for the participation of individuals.

The stress management composite of EI is emotional management and regulation to enhance the cognitive process and decision making was mapped *to* virtue ethics where this seems to strive for harmony and avoids elements that are artificial and strives at obtaining distinction within the spirit where precision, fairness, audacity, charity, reverence, and comradeship are alleviated with self-discipline (Aristotle, 1998 version). To effectively and constructively manage and control the emotions could result in the formation of trust, integrity, and credibility in relationships. In addition, this could enable transparency in a relationship that promotes integrity and trust.

The adaptability composite of change management means the ability to alter one's philosophy to novel situations or to overcome obstacles (Bar-On, 1997) was mapped to possibly personal integrity. These traits are very important especially due to the recent proliferation of fraudulent practices involving some of the large corporations that have shaken the public's confidence. Understanding the virtue ethics perspective of individuals and the possible link between VE and EI are of vital significance.

Lastly, the general mood dimension that represents the self-motivation and reflective regulation of the emotion was mapped to optimism in virtue ethics (Singh, 2011). Aristotle also mentioned that humans strive towards pleasure and achievement in life. Although pleasure means different things to different people, this trait can help an individual to achieve their ultimate goals. According to Aristotle, the development of the spirit informs interpretation to disconnect those looking for physical pleasure from those seeking shared or pensive contentment (Aristotle, 1998 version).

While not practical in life, this research provides a hopeful setting for reviewing the relationship between emotional intelligence and virtue ethics. There appears to be a qualified relevance of the emotional intelligence theory to the virtue ethics theory, but it is not comprehensible as to whether emotional intelligence is explicitly attached to virtue ethics (Bay & Mckeage, 2006). Nonetheless, as evidenced by the Singh (2011) study, observed research is probable in light of this information and should be meticulously yet cautiously addressed given the possibility for superfluous variables to persuade the emotional intelligence and virtue ethics affiliation.

In general, the research discovered universal guiding ideologies when allowing for the relationship between emotional intelligence and virtue ethics. Those ideologies

include: (a) increasing EI needs the tradition of virtue ethics such as, compassion, courage, honesty, and wisdom (b) the growth of EI has the possibility to be a moral practice (c) EI and VE appear to bear significant similarities, and (d) EI and VE are developed within the context of one's life purpose, and exercised over one's life within the context of a community (Culham & Bai, 2011).

In another study Kristjansson (2006, p. 40), showed a link between EI and VE that reinforces the Aristotelian position that virtue is regarding emotion as well as action: "that in order to be a truly virtuous individual, a person must not only act, but also react, in the right way, toward the right people, at the right time". Consequently, to act from virtue ethics is to operate from some fastidious enthusiasm; thus to declare that certain virtues are essential for moral decisions is to declare that acceptable moral decisions necessitate proper motives which extends to EI. The link between EI and VE could be seen as a form of holism, since these constructs give rise to a powerful individual who now has the ability to regulate emotions and reason to create a more effective business organization, the whole.

A review of the literature analyzed the conservative conceptions of reason and emotion. Within the accounting profession emotion is seen as a derisory and unreliable source for creating business decisions that may in reality be omitted (McPhail, 2004). The research fastidiously recommended that the dichotomy linking reason and emotion is less than noticeable. Commencing from a vital standpoint, emotion can be seen as a chief catalyst in accounting professional's decision-making processes and from an even more far-reaching angle it is probable to conceptualize reason as an exacting type of emotion. The allusion to be taken from this disagreement is that if emotion does occupy a

noteworthy position in societal structures and if it is an inescapable ingredient of decision-making then certainly it deserves more consideration than it has been known to date in scholarly accounting and in the accounting practice. The research also attempted to extend a justifiable case for emotional intelligence and virtue ethics; and delineate some explicit systems that this type of theory might attempt to expand. It would also appear to pursue plausibly that just as accounting decisions could be based on horrific or immature interpretations, so decisions could be and are taken based on an immature emotional intelligence and virtue ethics. Thus, whereas research conducted by Akers and Porter (2003); Jones and Abraham (2009); Usurelu, Nedelcu, Andrei and Loghin (2010) concluded by signifying that accounting professionals should be optimistic to make decisions based on their thoughts because they inescapably do anyhow, it also argues that in order to do this decisively; accounting professionals want to have more elaborate levels of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics. The next section described the accounting function and the different types of accounting professionals and the role that they play within the accounting organization.

### **Accounting industry**

#### **Accounting**

Accounting is the practice of recognizing, measuring, and transmitting financial information for creating educated decisions by users (Porter & Norton, 2011).

Accounting professionals are individuals who provide management accounting, financial accounting services. They are trained and usually licensed by the state.

## **Accounting Professionals**

An accounting professional is one who is trained in maintaining general ledger accounts appropriately and accurately. An accountant makes the custody or inspection of financial records his occupation. An accountant is also accountable for designing and calculating the chart of accounts necessary for recording different financial statement transactions (Porter & Norton, 2011).

Different types of accountants as described by Porter and Norton (2011) comprise: auditors; forensic accountants; public accountants; tax professionals; financial advisors; and consultants. Auditors scrutinize and communicate financial information for various entities such as companies, personal customers, and Federal, State, and local governments. Auditors assist to guarantee organizational effectiveness by maintaining accurate public reports and verify that taxes are paid. Auditing is a rigorous reflection of the information reporting of an enterprise by accounting specialists. Auditors also carry out the essential duties of the profession by presenting information to customers by preparing, analyzing, and verifying financial reports.

Forensic accounting is an extraordinary part of the accounting profession in which auditing, analytical skills, and accounting skill is utilized to support the court in lawful issues. Forensic accountants are also recognized as investigative auditors or auditors. They examine professional crimes as well as issues like securities schemes, misappropriation and bankruptcy issues.

A public accounting professionals is a general accountant who works for an accounting organization or in private practice. Public accountants' daily responsibilities

encompass auditing, tax, financial planning, consulting, and providing counsel on reparation and remuneration. Certified Public Accountant (CPA) is the legislative certification for eligible accountants in the U.S. for individuals who have conceded the Uniform Certified Public Accountant Examination.

A tax professional is exclusively qualified in the area of taxation. The U.S. Department of Treasury empowers tax professionals to represent taxpayers before the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for audits, collections, and appeals. A financial counselor is an individual who provides investment recommendations and financial preparation services to persons, organizations, and governments. Typically, a financial counselor consults with customers with an objective to improve their financial situations.

Accounting consultants are professionals with high proficiencies in preparing proforma financial statements and financial reporting. They evaluate, construe and assess financial statements and information for statutory, regulatory establishments, and internal administration of companies. Accounting consultants can assist a company with all of its financial requirements.

### **The Evolving Role of the Accounting Professional**

The function of the accounting professional has significantly expanded. The jobs that are essential for today's accounting professionals have been altered considerably since the beginning of the twentieth century. No longer are accounting professionals obligated to assume the mechanical responsibilities required for information provision, such as tax preparation, financial analysis and, bookkeeping (D.C. Stovall & P.S. Stovall,

2009). Instead, their comprehensive roles, which comprise of information facilitation and strategic investigation, place a greater weight on inter-personal communication and ethical virtues, thus repositioning accountants as information professionals rather than technical practitioners. Accounting professionals have constantly been expected to be well-informed and technically skilled; nonetheless, the capacity to produce a financial plan and organize financial records is not sufficient to attain the most favorable accomplishment in the profession. More importance is being placed on a person's emotional intelligence and virtue ethics ability set. An accountant's tendency to tap into his or her EI and VE skills may perhaps create the chief distinction in attaining a superior level of achievement. The accounting profession has acknowledged the developing function of the accounting professional and the significance of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics skills. However, the accounting profession has no knowledge of the relationship between these two constructs. In *The CPA Vision Project 2011 and Beyond*, a joint endeavor of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), one of the five fundamental competencies recognized are communication and leadership dexterity

This new emphasis on emotional intelligence (EI) and virtue (VE) is so significant that it has completed its way into the human resources of several accounting companies. Ernst & Young recognized several skills an applicant can hold that may augment the possibility of progressing inside the company (Manna et al., 2009). Most of the skills were directly connected to emotional Intelligence (EI) and virtue ethics (VE). These include:

-Converse clearly, verbally and in writing

- Display elasticity and adjust to new situations
- Develop strong, lasting relationships
- Prioritize well
- Think autonomously
- Embrace and flourish on challenge
- Implement sound judgment and common sense
- Collaborate and work well with people
- Reflect and work logically (Manna et al., 2009, p. 18).

Other companies other than Ernst & Young placed major emphasis on EI and VE skills. Manna et al. (2009) mentioned that Deloitte & Touche Consulting assesses employees based on performance competencies in the subsequent disciplines: leadership skills, management skills, client relationships, marketing skills, communication skills, and virtue ethics. Of these five proficiency functions, four are directly related to EI and VE. EI and VE play a major role in performing well in the business environment and are major factors in leadership competences.

EI and VE skills such as vision, building relationships, moral values, and developing people are more crucial to management achievement than emblematic management qualities, such as marketing direction, economic penetration, and development. It is apparent that emotional intelligence and virtue ethics have gained significance in the worldwide business environment. According to Bay and McKeage (2006); Usurelu et al. (2010), emotions and virtues occupy a great part in organizational existence, and have become soft skills that may permit accountants to achieve more in a diversity of areas such as client relations, decision-making and leadership functions.

Mike Poskey of ZeroRisk HR, Inc. suggested that in the past numerous organizations have been attentive to hiring and developmental programs that focused on hard skills (e.g., technical proficiency, industry awareness, instruction) and the assessment of character qualities. Capabilities such as assertiveness skills, stress administration, compassion, and virtue ethics were not at all measured in the selection process of these programs. In essence, these are vital factors that should not be avoided, and have an undeviating impact on the financial statements (Poskey, 2004, p. 3).

Research has indicated that know-how in the place of work was not the prominent distinction amid top employees. It was revealed that EI and VE were the main indicators that led to their successes. Bryan Stock of Bryan Stock Associates confirmed “Studies have revealed that EI and VE are greater indicators of success than almost any other credentials” (Stock, 2007, p. 8). This means that where ever you are in an organization, everybody should control the stress of unwavering transformation, cooperate efficiently with others, and possess moral virtues. Not having a definite level of EI and VE can cause the workforce to have relationships and leadership troubles in the work environment. According to Karwat, “employers, having two candidates with similar technological knowledge should choose the individual with higher emotional intelligence and virtue ethics competencies” (Karwat, 2008, p. 2). This is the reason for emotionally intelligent people and virtuous people to be more likely to be elected for essential projects and increase their profile in companies. In addition, Stein and Book (2006) asked the query “What does it take to be triumphant at work?” In exploring this inquiry, they experienced numerous people in various work-related settings. They recognized numerous combinations of EQ factors for professional groups. The premier competencies

for leading performing accountants were happiness, self regard, emotional self-awareness, virtue ethics, problem solving, and interpersonal relationships (Hughes, 2002, p. 1; Jackling & De Lange, 2009).

Technical competency, emotional intelligence and virtue ethics may be vital for acquiring superior levels of accomplishment in the accounting occupation. Successfully dealing with disparity, empathizing with co-workers to recognize and undertake trepidation, sharing opinions bluntly and succinctly to management and subordinates, encouraging one's self and others, and maintaining excellence and integrity are all EI and VE skills that may be critical to attaining professional achievement. By practicing and utilizing EI and VE competencies the present day accountant may become a more valuable and important capital to the entity. The study wanted to establish the degree to which the EI dimensions are related to VE in accounting professionals as measured by the EQ-i and EEQ instruments.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter presented a review of the literature, which provided information about the essential elements of the study. The concepts of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics were discussed. The potential linkage between emotional intelligence and virtue ethics was described. The changing role of the accounting profession and the evaluation of the levels of EI and VE needed were discussed. The instruments used to assess emotional intelligence and virtue ethics were reviewed including the reliability and validity studies conducted to ensure the value of each. How emotional intelligence and virtue ethics developed was also explored. The research design and methodology is

detailed in the next chapter. The next chapter included a description of the participants and the data analysis methods. The potential and anticipated results are also discussed.

## CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

### Restatement of the Problem and Purpose

The research problem of this study centers on the gap in knowledge that exists pertaining the relationship between EI and VE in accounting professionals. The relationship between EI and VE in the accounting industry is not known. This study aimed to explore how the knowledge of EI and VE will be beneficial to accounting professionals. In addition, this study contributed to closing a research gap in knowledge pertaining to the relationship between EI and VE.

This chapter included a discussion of the research design, the instruments that were used, and the data collection process. The population and sample were described along with the data analysis method. The expected outcomes were discussed along with the implications of the study. The purpose of this correlational quantitative research was to assess the association between EI and VE found in accounting professionals. EI and VE researchers have employed quantitative, positivist methods, such as surveys to quantify these constructs (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006).

Emotional intelligence (EI) and virtue ethics (VE) are areas of investigation that have in recent years become important in accounting organizations. Ignoring the function of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics from a client satisfaction stance possibly will influence the usefulness of accounting organizations. Since accounting professionals have numerous interactions with clients daily, utilizing and possessing the abilities of EI and VE could be useful.

Emotional Intelligence and virtue ethics are important for the accounting profession, as the ultimate goal is to satisfy both internal and external customers to increase productivity and profits for organizations. Customers who believe they are treated fairly and feel respected will always want to do business with these accounting organizations. Previous research indicates that high levels of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics are crucial for personal and business relationships (Angelidis & Ibrahim, 2011; Holian, 2006; McPhail, 2004). To appreciate the relationship between EI and VE the study employed the EI instrument and EEQ instrument, to assess the emotional intelligence and virtue ethics of accounting professionals from various industries that range from small to large corporations dispersed throughout the United States (Survey Monkey, 2013).

### **Research Design**

The purpose of the quantitative, correlational research was to explore the connection between emotional intelligence and virtue ethics in accounting professionals. The research design and methodology builds upon previous studies (Singh, 2011). In the foundation studies, quantitative methods were used to explore the nature and extent of the relationship between the constructs of EI and VE. In the study conducted by Singh (2011), the scores of the participants on two assessments were compared to resolve the relationship between the constructs of EI and VE as considered by the EQ-i and the EEQ respectively. In the Singh (2011) study, Pearson correlation was utilized to study the results and explain the findings.

Quantitative methods are used when the researcher is interested in describing trends or explaining relationships among variables (Field, 2009). The quantitative method was

chosen because it provided the aptitude to evaluate variables to decide whether significant statistical relationships exist. A correlational design can be utilized to establish a linear relationship linking these variables (Creswell, 2009). The quantitative correlational research design for this research, sought to resolve the association between EI and VE. The scores on a test of emotional intelligence (EQ-i) were compared to scores obtained on the Ethics Environmental Questionnaire (EEQ). The direction and strength of the relationship were also determined.

The methodological approach and design was driven by the research questions that seek to measure and examine the relationships between variables (Leedy, 1997). This study employed a quantitative, correlational, non-experimental survey research design utilizing two survey instruments. This correlational study examined the relationships between variables, the SPSS statistical software was utilized for data analysis, and Pearson correlation was utilized for hypotheses testing.

The data were collected utilizing a single survey divided into a three-part questionnaire (emotional intelligence, virtue ethics and demographics) with Likert-type scales for measurement. These questionnaires were self-administered online, via Survey Monkey, an online survey databank. Contact with prospective accounting participants was initiated by an email through Survey Monkey and permission was obtained at the time of data collection. The questionnaire consisted of the emotional intelligence (EQ-i) section, the ethics environment (EEQ) section, and the demographic data section. The EQ-i instrument survey measured adaptability, stress management, general mood, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions of accounting professionals. The EEQ instrument survey measured the moral attitudes of accounting professionals as it relates to

integrity and excellence. The instrument survey was self-administered online using Survey Monkey, an online survey databank. The criteria utilized were provided to Survey Monkey setting forth the population required for the study. Survey Monkey examined the databank of participants meeting the criteria of accounting professionals. Survey Monkey sent e-mails to potential participants. Interested participants were given a personal identification number for accessing the Survey Monkey portal and then were presented with the survey questions.

A random sampling method was utilized for this study. The target size for a research is decided by initially recognizing the size of the target population, as well as the preferred confidence level and interval. Assuming a normal distribution, the target sample size using the G\*Power 3 software was 84. The population studied was 208 accounting professionals that included tax accountants, auditors, management accountants, CPAs, general ledger accountants, financial accountants. The accounting professionals in this sample represented diverse industries that range from small to large corporations.

Survey Monkey captured responses from the survey questionnaire, and results were downloaded into SPSS by the researcher for additional analysis to test several hypotheses by means of Pearson correlation to determine any significant relationships between EI and VE among accounting professionals. The linear relationship between the variables was measured by calculating a correlation coefficient. This means that a coefficient of +1 signifies that the two variables are perfectly correlated. Conversely a coefficient of -1 signifies a perfect negative correlation. The significance of the correlation coefficient was used to test the hypothesis that the correlation is different

from zero. The significance of the correlation coefficient occurs as  $p < .05$ . A 95% confidence level and a confidence interval of  $\pm 5\%$  are regarded standard (Fields, 2009).

### **Population and Sample**

The population studied included approximately 208 accounting professionals in the United States. Survey Monkey provided the sampling frame for this research survey. Survey monkey obtained 208 completed survey results from accounting professionals in the United States with a 100 percent incidence rate (Survey Monkey, 2013). The accounting professionals in this study were representative of different industries that range from small to large corporations (Survey Monkey, 2013). Demographic information included industry, job title, years of experience and education.

### **Sampling Procedures**

A random sampling method was utilized for this study to ensure that the each participant in population has an equal opportunity to be selected (Vogt, 2007). Survey Monkey searched its database to procure accounting professionals for a fee of \$1500 for 208 participants. In this study, objectivity was realized with the use of a third party vendor, Survey Monkey to administer the survey to the participants online. This allowed the researcher to be detached from the participants. Interested participants were given an ID to access the link to the survey questions online. After accepting the terms of the survey, participants were directed to the survey questions.

### **Sample Size**

Several approaches are utilized to measure sample size (Lenth, 2001). Vogt

(2007), suggested that large sample sizes represent the population and are more likely to predict true relations between variables. This study utilized five emotional intelligence variables: adaptability, stress management, general mood, intrapersonal and interpersonal and, one variable for virtue ethics. Although Survey Monkey, the hosting company guaranteed 200 participants would respond, the G\*Power 3 (downloaded from the internet) was utilized to calculate the sample size. Using a power achieved of .8, effect size of .3 and probability error of .05 the minimum sample size calculated was 84.

### **Rationale for Quantitative Approach Research Design**

A correlational research design was utilized in this study to describe the linear relationship and calculate the degree of association between the variables (Field, 2009). The researcher (a) investigated six variables (b) collected data at one time administering two instruments, the EQ-i and EEQ (c) obtained scores for each variable (d) used Pearson correlation to explain the results, and (e) made interpretations based on statistical results. Data were collected in order to make inferences and understand the variables in the study (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). The investigation entailed looking at the variables of EI (adaptability, stress management, general mood, intrapersonal, and interpersonal) and their relationships to VE. This design aligned well with the research questions and the hypotheses as it sought to determine whether and to what degree a relationship existed between two or more variables. This was done by a correlational examination of the relationship between the dimensions of EI (adaptability, stress management general mood, intrapersonal, interpersonal) and VE in accounting professionals. The intent of the overarching question in the study was to explain how emotional intelligence affects virtue

ethics. According to Cook et al. (2011) and Libby and Thorne (2007) EI and VE play a large responsibility in organizational achievement as these skills may permit accounting professionals to function in a diversity of functions such as team building, decision-making, client expectations, and leadership.

Considering the correlation parameters mentioned above, the proposed quantitative survey research design was especially appropriate for answering the study's research question on the relationship between EI and VE in accounting professionals, which sought to measure and examine relationships between variables. Random sampling was used in this quantitative study based on the inclusion criteria. Survey Monkey was employed to administer the survey for this study. They guaranteed that 200 accounting professionals would respond to the survey with a 100 percent incidence rate (Survey Monkey, 2013).

Time and monetary constraints regulated the viability of the sample framework and were important in choosing the sample for this study. The proposed sample frame could be theoretically identified as being adequate since the selection was by Survey Monkey with an incidence rate of 100 percent rate; took two days to complete and represented accounting professionals in the United States. Using power analyses to calculate sample size was a good tool. According to Vogt (2007), researchers needing more power will lower their significance levels and increase their sample sizes. Another option was to ask better questions to increase design sensitivity. For this quantitative study bias was kept low by using a sample of 208. The quality of data collection is improved since the researcher did not have any direct communication with the participants.

## Variables

This quantitative research study was a correlational, non-experimental survey that utilized a positivist objective worldview. According to Swanson and Holton (2005) positivism looks at research questions in terms of relationships among variables to test and verify hypotheses. This view aligned with the research problem and questions in that this research on the correlation between EI and VE sought to utilize measurements and relationships between variables. Therefore, not only was a quantitative study appropriate for addressing the research questions, but also created an avenue for realizing the purpose of the research study. Based on the premise that the intention of the study was to show the relationship connecting variables rather than to manipulate them, a quantitative correlational design was appropriate. Consequently, the data collected from the quantitative method were statistically analyzed using SPSS to establish if a relationship existed between EI and VE in accounting professionals.

The variables studied included the five dimensions of emotional intelligence: interpersonal, stress management, adaptability, intrapersonal, general mood and one for virtue ethics. A study by Singh (2011) that measured ethics in the workplace through emotional intelligence identified the variables in a similar fashion. A correlation survey research was conducted to observe the association involving emotional intelligence and virtue ethics in accounting professionals. Therefore, correlation indicated the strength between the variables and provided clearer predictions. The variables were defined as follows: General mood composites involved happiness and optimism. Adaptability composites consisted of problem solving, reality testing, and flexibility Interpersonal

composites comprised of interpersonal relationships, social responsibility, and empathy. Stress management composites indicated stress tolerance and impulse control. Intrapersonal composites included emotional self- awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, and independence. Virtue ethics as a variable is an ethics of character that promotes integrity and excellence (Flynn, 2008). It also is the standards of human conduct that governs the behavior of individuals, character traits, human happiness, practical wisdom, evaluation of the emotions (Surendra, 2010).

### **Relationships among Variables**

To ascertain the relationship between the variables, correlation was utilized (Field, 2009). This study explored that the dimensions of EI are related to VE in accounting professionals. A correlational relationship means that two variables move in a synchronized fashion and determines the degree of association between two variables (Trochim, 2006). The research questions provided the foundation for the development of the hypotheses for this quantitative study.

The correlation may be positive, negative, or non-existent. This study's null hypotheses stated that no linear relationships exist between the five dimensions of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics in accounting professionals. The alternative relationship may be positive, denoting that as one variable increases the other variable increases, or the alternative relationship may be negative meaning that as the variable increases the other decreases.

## Instrumentation

The research study's research constructs were addressed with utilizing Bar-On's EO-i and EEQ measurement instruments. Emotional Intelligence was measured using the EQ-i, an instrument developed and administered by Singh (2011) consisting of five distinct dimensions. The reason of measuring the total score, the EEQ value as well as the individual subscale is that the greater the scores on the and EEQ, the more positive prediction of EI being displayed among accounting professionals as VE evolves and prospers among them. The EQ-i instrument measured the level of emotional behaviors and attitudes in accounting professionals. The operational definitions for each construct were as follows: Adaptability composite measured problem solving, reality testing, and flexibility; General mood composites measured happiness and optimism; Interpersonal composite measured interpersonal relationships, social responsibility, and empathy; Intrapersonal composite measured emotional self- awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, and independence, and Stress management composites measured stress tolerance and impulse control. The five dimensions were general mood, adaptability, stress control, intrapersonal, and interpersonal. The questions in the instrument utilized a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1= *strongly disagree*, 2=*Disagree*, 3=*Neutral*, 4=*Agree*, 5= *strongly agree* to ascertain the sum of the responses to the 15 questions. This sum was used as the value for the emotional intelligence dimension with a maximum score of 75 and minimum of 15. The instrument is widely used to measure the level of EI across five major composites: stress management intrapersonal, interpersonal, general mood, and adaptability. These composites are used to predict various aspects of individual conduct

that are important for workplace efficiency and accomplishment (Bar-On, 2005; Colfax et. al, 2010; Singh, 2011; Stein, Papdogiannis, Yip, & Sitarenios, 2009).

Virtue ethics, the other variable was measured using the EEQ measurement scale developed and administered by Charlotte McDaniel (1997) and consisted of five survey questions. The EEQ instrument measured the moral attitudes in accounting professionals as they relate to excellence and integrity. Virtue ethics is an ethics of disposition that promotes integrity and excellence (Flynn, 2008). Virtue ethics also are the standards of human conduct that governs the behavior of individuals, character traits, human happiness, practical wisdom, and evaluation of the emotions (Surendra, 2010). The five-item questionnaire with a five-point Likert format had responses ranging from 1=*strongly agree* to 5=*strongly disagree*. The maximum score was 25 and the minimum was five. According to McDaniel (1997) a score of 3.5 (score range 1= *low* to 5= *high*) reflects a positive ethical environment. The EEQ instrument survey measured the virtue ethics of accountants as they achieve excellence from living a morally good life, in an ethical environment that uses ethical values to guide behavior, deliver direction for action, clarify moral dilemmas, and bring about the moral importance of the emotion. Table 2 describes the EI and VE constructs.

Table 2. Variable Mapping

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Intrapersonal Composite	
Q1	Self Regard: Looking at both my good points and bad points, I think well of myself
Q2	Emotional Self-Awareness: I'm in touch with my emotions
Q3	Assertiveness: It's easy for me to tell people what I think
Q4	Independence: I tend to cling to others
Q5	Self- Actualization: I accomplish my goals
Interpersonal Composite	
Q6	Empathy: I value each person's unique and individual needs
Q7	Social Responsibility: I care about the community, act responsibly and have social consciousness
Q8	Interpersonal Relationship: I have good relationships with others
Stress Management Composite	
Q9	Stress Tolerance: I can handle stress without getting too nervous
Q10	Impulse Control: I know how to keep calm in difficult situations
Adaptability Composite	
Q11	Reality Testing: I have the capacity to remain objective by seeing things as they really are
Q12	Flexibility: It's easy for me to make adjustments in general
Q13	Problem Solving: I am able to find solutions to problems where emotions are involved
General Mood Composite	
Q14	Optimism: I remain hopeful and resilient despite occasional setbacks
Q15	Happiness: I am satisfied, content and enjoy many aspects of my life

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(continued)

Table 2. Variable Mapping (continued)

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Virtue Ethics	
Q16	My ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization to achieve its goals.
Q17	My values align with the organization's values
Q18	I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization.
Q19	I believe that open communication and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment.
Q20	I believe that management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees.

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### **Validity and Reliability**

The EQ-i instrument is widely used to measure emotional intelligence and reports an internal reliability and retest reliability greater than .75 (Singh, 2011).

The EEQ provides internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .93, test-retest reliability of .88, is cost effective and requires minimum investment of time (McDaniel, 1997).

### **Ethical Considerations**

This research study did not collect any personal identifying information about the accounting participants. The researcher had the responsibility of not collecting any personal information from the participants that would in any manner lead to situations such as identity theft. Participants were given clear instructions concerning the purpose of the study, how the information collected was safeguarded, and obtained informed consent. Maintaining safe practices was used to safeguard the data collected. All participants remained anonymous.

The survey was maintained on Survey Monkey's server on magnetic media. At the end of the Survey, the resulting data were transferred to the researcher's personal computer. Participants' data were secured as the researcher requested that Survey Monkey permanently delete all data from the server. The researcher copied the data to an encrypted USB flash drive protected in researcher's security deposit container. The data will be destroyed after seven years.

The researcher provided clear instructions concerning the research study, the procedures and the results. The study sought consent from the participants and the participants remained anonymous since no personal identifiable information was collected. The Belmont principle of beneficence was satisfied since risk of harm would be minimal and not more than what was encountered on a daily basis using the Internet. The researcher protected the participants' data by requesting Survey Monkey to permanently destroy the data from its server and also the investigator copied the data to an encoded USB drive protected in a locked safety deposit container.

### **Data Collection Process**

Data collection was utilized using survey Monkey, which is an online survey organization. Participants included 208 Accounting professionals, which is an adequate sample size more than 30 (Field, 2009). The researcher made contact with an account manager with Survey Monkey to administer the survey instrument. The total cost of completing the survey was \$1,500. The researcher prepared the three-part survey instrument into the Survey Monkey survey builder.

The survey questionnaire was separated into three sections as follows:

1. The first section of the questionnaire focused on emotional intelligence and consisted of 5 dimensions measured with the help of 15 items from the partially adopted instrument. See Appendix B (Singh, 2011).
2. The second section of the questionnaire consisted of virtue ethics characteristics developed using 5 items from the partially adopted instrument. See Appendix B (Charlotte McDaniel, 1997).
3. The third section of the survey contained five demographic questions about the participant.

The survey instrument was sent via email using a random sampling technique. Interested accounting participants accessed the survey instrument by clicking a link after reading the permission and informed consent. Information was stored in researchers account to be downloaded.

### **Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using accepted procedures in correlation research. SPSS software was used to analyze the questionnaire results. The scores on the both the EQ-i and EEQ instruments were compared to determine the extent and direction of the relationship. According to Jones and Kottler (2006), assumptions need to be clearly articulated when deciding upon which statistical tools to use in a study. Several statistical assumptions were made about the scores that were obtained from the EQ-i and EEQ assessments.

In order for the test statistic to be valid the sampling distribution had to be normally distributed, the data should be measured at least at the interval level, the variables should

be linear and normality for the test of hypotheses should hold true. Creating a scatter plot using SPSS to ascertain if the points on the scatter diagram tend to cluster around a straight line checked the assumption that a linear relationship existed between the dimensions of EI and VE. Normality for the test of hypotheses assumes that the sample data and sampling distribution are normal. From the central limit theorem large samples tend to be normal. In this study the sample size is 208. Statistical significance is the degree to which the data contradict the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis will be rejected if the sample data are different from what they would be if the null hypothesis were true. The test is significant ( $p < .05$ ) when the sample distribution is significantly different from a normal distribution and it is not significant ( $p > .05$ ) when the sample distribution is not significantly different from a normal distribution.

Creswell (2009) suggested using five steps to perform hypothesis testing, which include (a) identify an alternative and null hypothesis, (b) locate the level of significance, (c) assemble the data, (d) calculate the sample statistic, and (e) formulate a decision about accepting or rejecting the null hypothesis. The null hypotheses were identified. The level of significance was set ( $p = < .05$ ). Pearson correlation was utilized to answer the research questions and test the accompanying hypotheses.

The research questions and accompanying hypotheses are as follows:

RQ1: To what extent are the intrapersonal dimensions of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

RQ2: To what extent are the interpersonal dimensions of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

RQ3: To what extent are the stress management dimensions of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

RQ4: To what extent are the adaptability dimensions of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

RQ5: To what extent are the general mood dimensions of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

Ho1: The intrapersonal dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting professionals.

Ha1: The intrapersonal dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting professionals.

Ho2: The interpersonal dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting professionals.

Ha2: The interpersonal dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting professionals.

Ho3: The stress management dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting professionals.

Ha3: The stress management dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting professionals.

Ho4: The adaptability dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting professionals.

Ha4: The adaptability dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting professionals.

Ho5: The general mood dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting professionals.

Ha5: The general mood dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting professionals.

Pearson correlation was utilized to test the hypotheses in the study and to describe decisions on whether to accept or reject the null hypotheses connected with the data.

Pearson's correlation is a parametric statistical analysis that requires only that the data are interval for it to be an accurate measure of the relationship between the two variables (Field, 2009). The nature of the data collected was ordinal, with a scoring of 1=strongly

agree to 5=strongly disagree. According to Vogt (2007) taking ordinal data and analyzing them as though they are quantitative is very common in survey research. Cooper and Schindler (2011) also posited that the Likert scale consists of statements in which the participant is asked to agree or disagree with each statement after which a mathematical tally is computed to determine the participant's general position. The variables in this study were calculated from the linear sum of a subset of items with the resulting variables being at least interval. Statistical assumptions were necessary in order to establish whether the correlation coefficient is significant and which statistical test is most appropriate to utilize. The assumptions of linearity, data type and normality for test of hypothesis need to be true in order to accurately reflect reality in the study.

### **Expected Outcomes**

A relationship between EI and VE was taken from scores on the EQ-i and EEQ instrument survey questions. The outcomes include rejecting or failing to reject the null hypotheses. Not accepting the null hypothesis allowed for the possibility that the hypothesis could be rejected if more data were available, or if alternate explanations appear plausible (Field, 2009). It was expected that the correlations would be significant at least at the  $p = .05$  level.

### **Anticipated Results**

It was anticipated that the research questions would be answered in the affirmative and that all the null hypotheses would be rejected. The scope of this study may provide evidence based on studies carried out in other business organizations to support the thesis that EI and VE can lead to effective organizational performance in

accounting professionals. The results will indicate that a significant relationship exists between EI and VE in accounting professionals.

### **Implications**

A study that demonstrates a relationship between emotional intelligence and virtue ethics has several important implications. University educators and administrators can be encouraged to sponsor specific processes, systems, and programs that assess and develop the emotional intelligence and virtue ethics skills of incoming students. Management and human resources could be encouraged to focus on emotional and virtue ethics skills development to help employees improve professionally, and resolve career related decisions. This study will also assist the accounting profession to design diverse recruiting and instructional systems to guarantee that prospective accounting professionals hold EI and VE logical abilities.

In summary, the steps used to conduct this study were as follows:

1. A quantitative research was designed to explore two relationships between two constructs, emotional intelligence and virtue ethics.
2. The population included approximately 200 accounting professionals.
3. The data collection instruments were standardized assessments, EQ-i and the EEQ.
4. The data collection process included soliciting accounting professionals to read and respond to a number of questions in a survey.
5. The data analysis process included downloaded the collected data into SPSS for further analysis.

The next chapter discusses the data screening process, the statistical analyses

performed, and the justification for why the specific statistical procedures were chosen. The results are specified and displayed in a series of figures and tables. Lastly, the specific statistical analyses are described in detail.

## CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

Emotional intelligence (EI) and virtue ethics (VE) are areas of investigation that have in recent years become important in accounting organizations (Bay & McKeage, 2006; Singh, 2011). Research on the relationship between emotional intelligence and virtue ethics in accounting professionals have received thus far, little attention. Therefore, the relationship between emotional intelligence and virtue ethics in the accounting industry is not known. The reason of this correlational quantitative research was to assess the relationship between EI and VE found in accounting professionals. Emotional intelligence and virtue ethics researchers have utilized the use of quantitative, positivist methods, such as surveys to quantify these constructs (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006). The researcher used a survey questionnaire that consisted of 15 items from the Emotional Intelligence (EQ-i) instrument (Singh, 2011) and five items from the Ethics Environment Questionnaire (EEQ) scale (McDaniel, 1997). Descriptive statistics, hypothesis testing, and correlational analysis were performed on the data using the SPSS software.

Chapter four begins by restating the research questions and subsequent hypotheses. Next, a summary of the results by hypotheses is presented. Chapter four concludes with detailed analyses of the results related to the research questions.

### **Restatement of Research questions and Hypotheses**

This study addressed the relationship between EI and VE in accounting professionals. The relationship between the constructs of EI and VE was reviewed. The research question, the sub questions, and hypotheses used in this research study are specified below:

To what extent are EI and VE related in accounting professionals as measured by The EQ-i and EEQ instruments?

RQ1: To what extent is the intrapersonal dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

RQ2: To what extent is the interpersonal dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

RQ3: To what extent is the stress management dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

RQ4: To what extent is the adaptability dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

RQ5: To what extent is the general mood dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

Ho1: The intrapersonal dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting professionals.

Ha1: The intrapersonal dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting professionals.

Ho2: The interpersonal dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting professionals.

Ha2: The interpersonal dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting professionals.

Ho3: The stress management dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting professionals.

Ha3: The stress management dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting

professionals.

Ho4: The adaptability dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting

Professionals.

Ha4: The adaptability dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting

professionals.

Ho5: The general mood dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting

professionals.

Ha5: The general mood dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting

professionals.

Pearson product-moment correlation ( $r$ ) is a bivariate measure of association (strength) of the connection between two variables (Field, 2009). The association between the variables is linear when the two variables tend to form a straight line when plotted on a graph. Given that all variables are constant and the hypotheses request to evaluate the relationships, the Pearson correlations are the suitable bivariate as utilized to calculate the correlation coefficient to establish the potency of the relationships. A coefficient of +1 expresses that two variables are perfectly positively associated, hence as one variable increases, the other increases by a similar value. In addition, a coefficient of -1 expresses a perfect negative relationship signifying as one variable increases, the other decreases by a similar value. A coefficient of 0 expresses no linear relationship, therefore as one variable changes the other remains the same. The assumptions of Pearson correlation were assessed, including linearity. Scatter plots are useful for testing the relationship between variables and is often the best way for discovering that a relation is

not linear (Vogt, 2007). Linearity assumes a straight-line relationship between the variables. Linearity was assessed by assessment of scatter plots (Field, 2009).

### **Research Hypotheses**

While much has been speculated about the relationship between EI and VE in the accounting profession, little has been proven, especially when looking at the relationship between EI and VE as predictors of organizational success. Hypotheses testing were used to test the assumptions about the population parameters. In each case a report about the population was made that may or may not be accurate (Donnelly, 2007). Consequently, the reason for testing the hypothesis was to make a statistical conclusion about not accepting or accepting the assertions. According to Donnelly (2007), each hypothesis test has both an alternative hypothesis and a null hypothesis. The null hypothesis signified by  $H_0$ : represents and involves stating the certainty that the population mean is  $<$ ,  $=$ ,  $>$  a definite value. The alternative hypothesis denoted by  $H_a$ : signifies the reverse of the null hypothesis and holds firm if the null hypothesis is established to be untrue. The significance used in this study is  $p = < .05$ . Based on this p value the decision is made whether or not to reject the null hypothesis.  $H_0$  is rejected if the p value is less than .05. This research was designed to investigate if such a correlation exists between each variable and to what extent a relationship existed. Data were analyzed to test the following hypotheses and these research questions resulted in the formation of the following hypotheses and descriptive statistics used in the study:

The descriptive statistics of the survey questions are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Questions	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Q1. Looking at both my good points and bad points, I think well of myself.	208	4.087	0.697
Q2. I'm in touch with my emotions.	208	4.139	0.677
Q3. It's easy for me to tell people what I think.	208	3.606	0.957
Q4. I tend to cling to others.	208	2.274	0.920
Q5. I accomplish my goals.	208	3.942	0.778
Q6. I value each person's unique and individual needs.	208	4.000	0.736
Q7. I care about the community, act responsibly and have social consciousness.	208	4.216	0.713
Q8. I have good relationships with others.	208	4.110	0.623
Q9. I can handle stress without getting too nervous.	208	3.582	0.913
Q10. I know how to keep calm in difficult situations.	208	3.789	0.873
Q11. I have the capacity to remain objective by seeing things as they really are.	208	3.942	0.772
Q12. It's easy for me to make adjustments in general.	208	3.779	0.810
Q13. I am able to find solutions to problems where emotions are involved.	208	3.827	0.701
Q14. I remain hopeful and resilient despite occasional setbacks.	208	3.957	0.757
Q15. I am satisfied, content and enjoy many aspects of my life.	208	3.990	0.868
Q16. My ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals.	208	4.274	0.686
Q17. My values align with the organization's values.	208	3.938	0.793
Q18. I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization.	208	3.870	0.734
Q19. I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment.	208	4.438	0.578
Q20. I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees.	208	4.385	0.649

**Research question 1.** To what extent is the intrapersonal dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

*Hypothesis:*

*Ho: The intrapersonal dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting professionals.*

*Ha: The intrapersonal dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting professionals.*

The trend line shows a positive linear relationship between the means of intrapersonal dimension of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics. This means that as the mean of intrapersonal dimension increases, the mean of virtue ethics also increases.

Figure 2 shows the scatter plot between the mean of intrapersonal dimension and mean of virtue ethics.

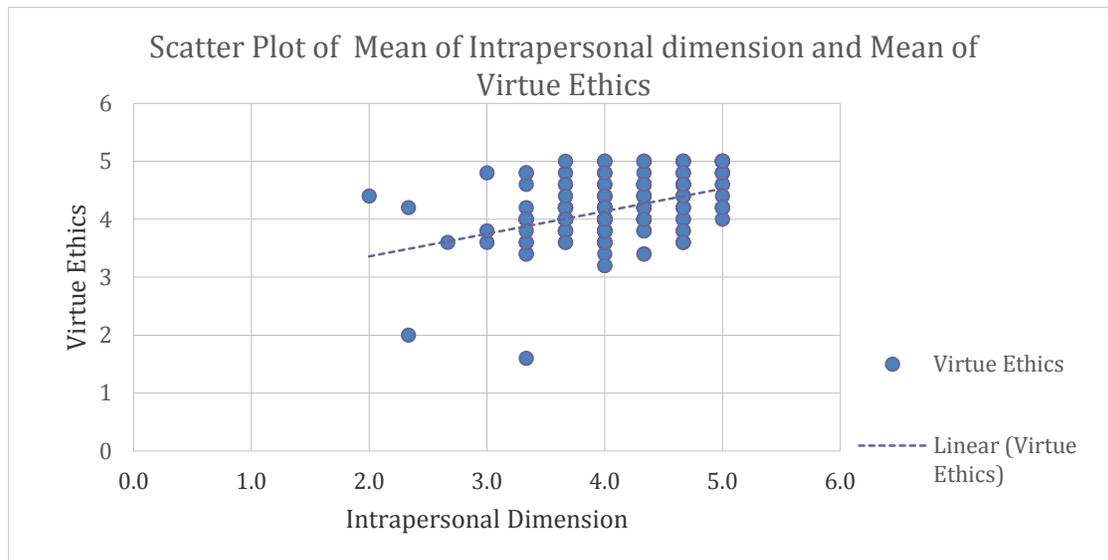


Figure 2. Scatter plot between the means of intrapersonal dimension and virtue ethics

Pearson product-moment correlation was performed to establish the extent to which the intrapersonal dimension of emotional intelligence was related to virtue ethics in accounting professionals. The result showed that there was not enough evidence to accept the null hypothesis. The alternative hypothesis was accepted as the mean

intrapersonal dimension of EI was related to the mean of VE in accounting professionals with  $r = 0.4216$  and  $p < .0001$ . Therefore, the correlation was statistically significant.

Table 4 presents the correlational analysis.

Table 4. Correlation Between the Mean of Intrapersonal Dimension and Mean of Virtue Ethics

Pearson Correlation Coefficients, N = 208 Prob >  r  under H0: Rho=0		
	Intrapersonal Dimension	Virtue Ethics
Intrapersonal Dimension	1	0.4216 < .0001
Virtue Ethics	0.4216 < .0001	1

The analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant correlation between Q2, “I’m in touch with my emotions”, and Q16, “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”, with  $r = 0.2085$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0025 < \alpha = 0.05$ , and Q17, “my values align with the organization’s values” with  $r = 0.1521$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0292 < \alpha = 0.05$  and, Q18, “I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization”, with  $r = 0.2212$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0013 < \alpha = 0.05$  and Q19, “I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment”, with  $r = 0.2629$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0001 < \alpha = 0.05$ , and Q20, “I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”, with  $r = 0.2400$  and  $p \text{ value} =$

0.0005 <  $\alpha$  = 0.05. Table 5 presents the inter-correlation between the intrapersonal composites of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics questions.

Table 5. Correlating Intrapersonal Composite with Virtue Ethics

Pearson Correlation Coefficients, N = 208 Prob >  r  under H0: Rho=0					
	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
Q1	0.1321	0.0885	0.0221	0.0135	0.0329
	0.0571	0.2035	0.7516	0.8466	0.6374
Q2	0.2085	0.1521	0.2212	0.2629	0.2400
	0.0025	0.0292	0.0013	0.0001	0.0005
Q3	0.2021	0.1838	0.2706	0.0862	0.2996
	0.0034	0.0079	< .0001	0.2157	< .0001
Q4	-0.1731	-0.1220	-0.0615	-0.0902	-0.0964
	0.0124	0.0791	0.3775	0.1950	0.1660
Q5	0.2561	0.2134	0.1307	0.1316	0.1494
	0.0002	0.0020	0.0600	0.0582	0.0313

Table 5 showed a statistically significant correlation between Q3, “It’s easy for me to tell people what I think”, and Q16 with  $r = 0.2021$  and  $p$  value =  $0.0034 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q17 with  $r = 0.1838$  and  $p$  value =  $0.0079 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q18 with  $r = 0.2706$  and  $p$  value <  $0.0001 < \alpha = 0.05$ , and Q20 with  $r = 0.2996$  and  $p$  value <  $0.0001 < \alpha = 0.05$ . Q3 was not significantly correlated to Q19 with  $r = .0862$  and  $p = 0.2157 > \alpha = 0.05$ . A statistically significant negative correlation between Q4, “I tend to cling to others”, and Q16 with  $r =$

-0.1731 and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0124 < \alpha = 0.05$  was found. Q4 showed a negative statistically insignificant correlation to Q17, Q18, Q19 and Q20 (see Table 5). Further, Table 5 revealed a statistically significant correlation between Q5, “it’s easy for me to tell people what I think”, and Q16 with  $r = 0.2561$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0002 < \alpha = 0.05$ , and Q17 with  $r = 0.2134$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0020 < \alpha = 0.05$ , and Q20 with  $r = 0.1494$  and  $p \text{ value} < 0.0313 < \alpha = 0.05$ . Q5 was not significantly correlated to Q18 with  $r = 0.1307$  and  $p = 0.0600 > \alpha = 0.05$  and Q19 with  $r = 0.1316$  and  $p = 0.0582 > \alpha = 0.05$ . However, there was no significant correlation between Q1, “looking at both my good points and bad points, I think well of myself”, and Q16 with  $r = 0.1321$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0571 > \alpha = 0.05$ , Q17 with  $r = 0.0885$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.2035 > \alpha = 0.05$ , Q 18 with  $r = .0221$  and  $p \text{ value} = .7516 > \alpha = 0.05$ , Q19 with  $r = .0135$  and  $p \text{ value} = .8466 > \alpha = 0.05$ , and Q20 with  $r = 0.0329$  and  $p \text{ value} = .6374 > \alpha = 0.05$ . The conclusion from the analysis is that the intrapersonal dimension of emotional intelligence is positively related to virtue ethics except that tending to cling to others and thinking well of one’s self are not related to virtue ethics.

**Research question 2.** To what extent is the interpersonal dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

*Hypothesis:*

*Ho: The interpersonal dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting professionals.*

*Ha: The interpersonal dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting professionals.*

The trend line shows a positive linear relationship between the means of Interpersonal dimension of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics. This means that as the mean of interpersonal dimension increases, the mean of virtue ethics also increases.

Figure 3 shows the scatter plot between the mean of interpersonal dimension and mean of virtue ethics.

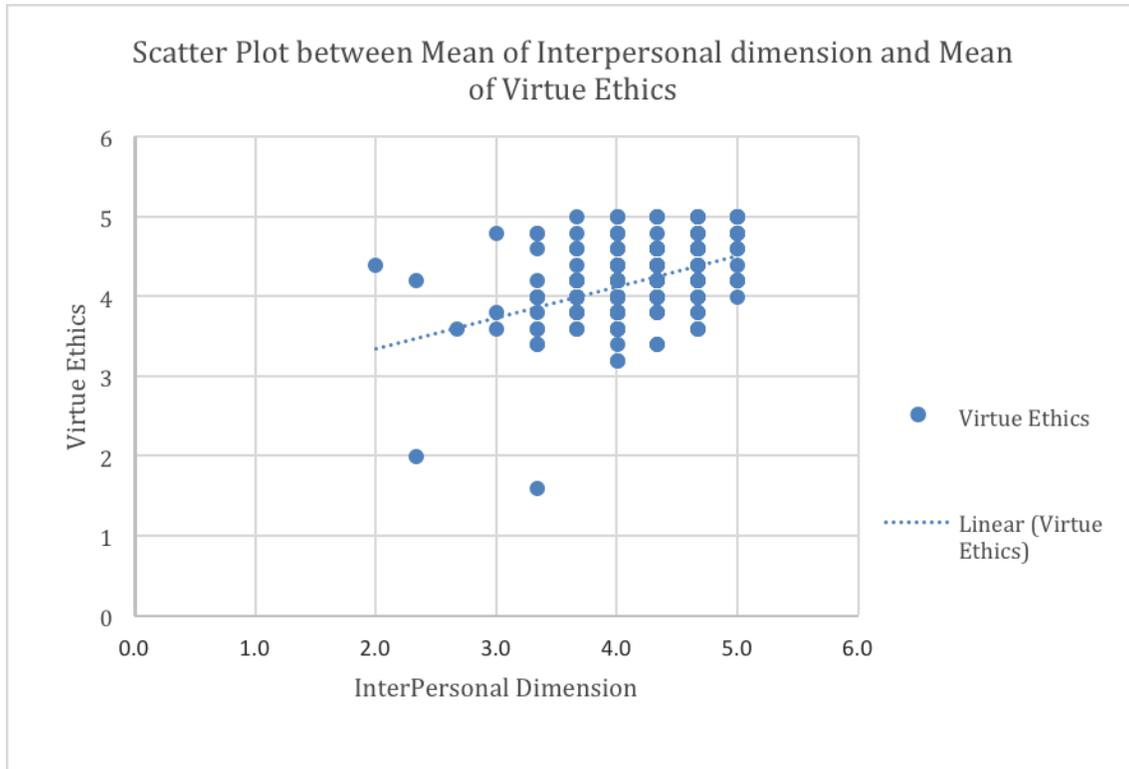


Figure 3. Scatter plot between the means of interpersonal dimension and virtue ethics

Pearson product-moment correlation was performed to determine the extent to which the interpersonal dimension of EI was related to VE in accounting professionals. The result showed that there was not enough evidence to accept the null hypothesis. The alternative hypothesis was accepted as the mean of the interpersonal dimension of EI was related to the mean of VE in accounting professionals with  $r = 0.4216$  and  $p < .0001$ .

Table 6 presents the correlational analysis.

Table 6. Correlation Between the Mean of Interpersonal Dimension and Mean of Virtue Ethics

Pearson Correlation Coefficients, N = 208 Prob >  r  under H0: Rho=0		
	Interpersonal Dimension	Virtue Ethics
Interpersonal Dimension	1	0.4216 < .0001
Virtue Ethics	0.4216 < .0001	1

The analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant correlation between Q6, “I value each person’s unique and individual needs”, and Q16, “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”, with  $r = 0.2394$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0005 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q17, “my values align with the organization’s values”, with  $r = 0.2153$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0018 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q18, “I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization”, with  $r = 0.2327$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0007 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q19, “I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment”, with  $r = 0.2726$  and  $p \text{ value} < 0.0001 < \alpha = 0.05$ , and Q20, “I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”, with  $r = 0.2634$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0001 < \alpha = 0.05$ . Table 7 presents the inter-correlation between the interpersonal composite of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics questions.

Table 7. Correlating Interpersonal Composite with Virtue Ethics

Pearson Correlation Coefficients, N = 208 Prob >  r  under H0: Rho=0					
	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
Q6	0.2394	0.2153	0.2327	0.2726	0.2634
	0.0005	0.0018	0.0007	< .0001	0.0001
Q7	0.4017	0.2290	0.1739	0.3318	0.2681
	< .0001	0.0009	0.0120	< .0001	< .0001
Q8	0.1660	0.1704	0.1793	0.0930	0.1690
	0.0165	0.0139	0.0095	0.1816	0.0147

The results in table 7 showed a statistically significant correlation between Q7, “I care about the community, act responsibly and have social consciousness”, and Q16, with  $r = 0.4017$  and  $p \text{ value} < .0001$   $\alpha < 0.05$ , Q17 with  $r = 0.2290$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0009 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q18 with  $r = 0.1739$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0120 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q19 with  $r = 0.3318$  and  $p \text{ value} < 0.0001 < \alpha = 0.05$ , and Q20 with  $r = 0.2681$  and  $p \text{ value} < 0.0001 < \alpha = 0.05$ . Also, a statistically significant correlation between Q8, “I have good relationships with others”, and Q16, with  $r = 0.1660$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0165 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q17, with  $r = 0.1704$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0139 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q18 with  $r = 0.1793$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0095 < \alpha = 0.05$ , and Q20, with  $r = 0.1690$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0147 < \alpha = 0.05$  was found. There was no significant correlation between Q8 and Q19 with  $r = 0.0930$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.1816 > \alpha = 0.05$ . The conclusion from the analysis was that the interpersonal dimension of EI was positively related to VE, except that having a good relationship with others is not related

to the belief that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment.

**Research question 3.** To what extent is the stress management dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

*Hypothesis:*

*Ho: The stress management dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting professionals.*

*Ha: The stress management dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting professionals.*

The trend line shows a positive linear relationship between the means of stress management dimension of EI and VE. This means that as the mean of stress management dimension increases, the mean of virtue ethics also increases. Figure 4 shows the scatter plot between the mean of stress management dimension and mean of virtue ethics.

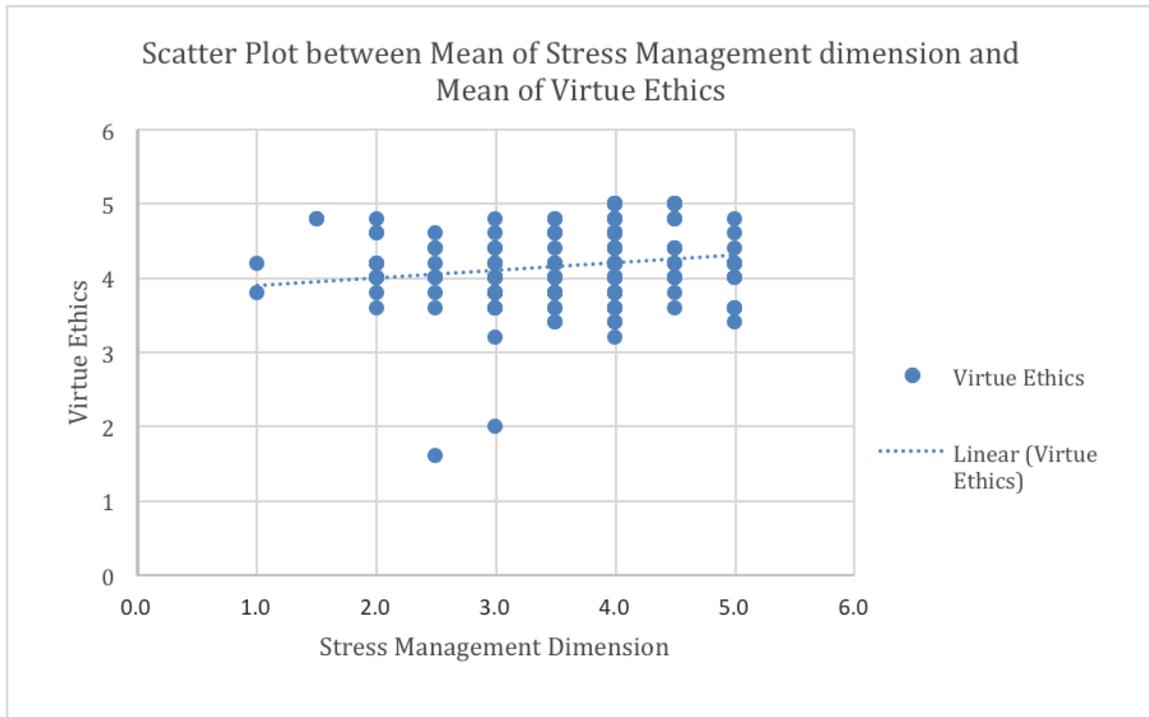


Figure 4. Scatter plot between the means of stress management dimension and virtue ethics

Pearson product-moment correlation was performed to determine the extent to which the stress management dimension of emotional intelligence was related to virtue ethics in accounting professionals. The result showed that there was not enough evidence to accept the null hypothesis. The alternative hypothesis was accepted that the mean of the stress management dimension of EI was related to the mean of VE in accounting professionals with  $r = 0.1743$  and  $p = .0118 < \alpha = 0.05$ . Therefore, the correlation is statistically significant. Table 8 presents the correlational analysis.

Table 8. Correlation Between the Mean of Stress Management Dimension and Mean of Virtue Ethics

Pearson Correlation Coefficients, N = 208 Prob >  r  under H0: Rho=0		
	Stress Management Dimension	Virtue Ethics
Stress Management Dimension	1	0.1743
Virtue Ethics	0.1743 0.0118	1

The analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant correlation between Q9, “I can handle stress without getting too nervous”, and Q20, “I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”, with  $r = 0.1505$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0301 < \alpha = 0.05$ . The result showed no significant correlation between Q9 and Q16, Q17, Q18 and Q19 (see Table 9). Also, a statistically significant correlation between Q10, “I know how to keep calm in difficult situations”, and Q16 with  $r = 0.1420$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0407 < \alpha = 0.05$ , and Q18 with  $r = 0.1585$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0222 < \alpha = 0.05$  was found. No significant correlation between Q10 and Q17, Q19 and Q20 existed. (see Table 9). Table 9 presents the inter-correlation between the stress management composite of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics questions.

Table 9. Correlating Stress Management Composite with Virtue Ethics

	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
Q9	0.1144	0.0904	0.1276	0.0738	0.1505
	0.0997	0.1937	0.0662	0.2896	0.0301
Q10	0.1420	0.1055	0.1585	0.0395	0.1252
	0.0407	0.1293	0.0222	0.5713	0.0715

The conclusion from the analysis was that the stress management dimension of emotional intelligence was positively related to virtue ethics when management maintains an ethically robust and fair working environment their employees are happier and can manage their stress. Also, the ability to keep calm in difficult situations can lead to consistent and resilient ethical actions in an organization.

**Research question 4.** To what extent is the adaptability dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

*Hypothesis:*

*Ho: The adaptability dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting professionals.*

*Ha: The adaptability dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting professionals.*

The trend line shows a positive linear relationship between the means of adaptability dimension of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics. This means that as the mean of adaptability dimension increases, the mean of virtue ethics also increases. Figure 5 shows the scatter plot between the mean of adaptability dimension and mean of virtue ethics.

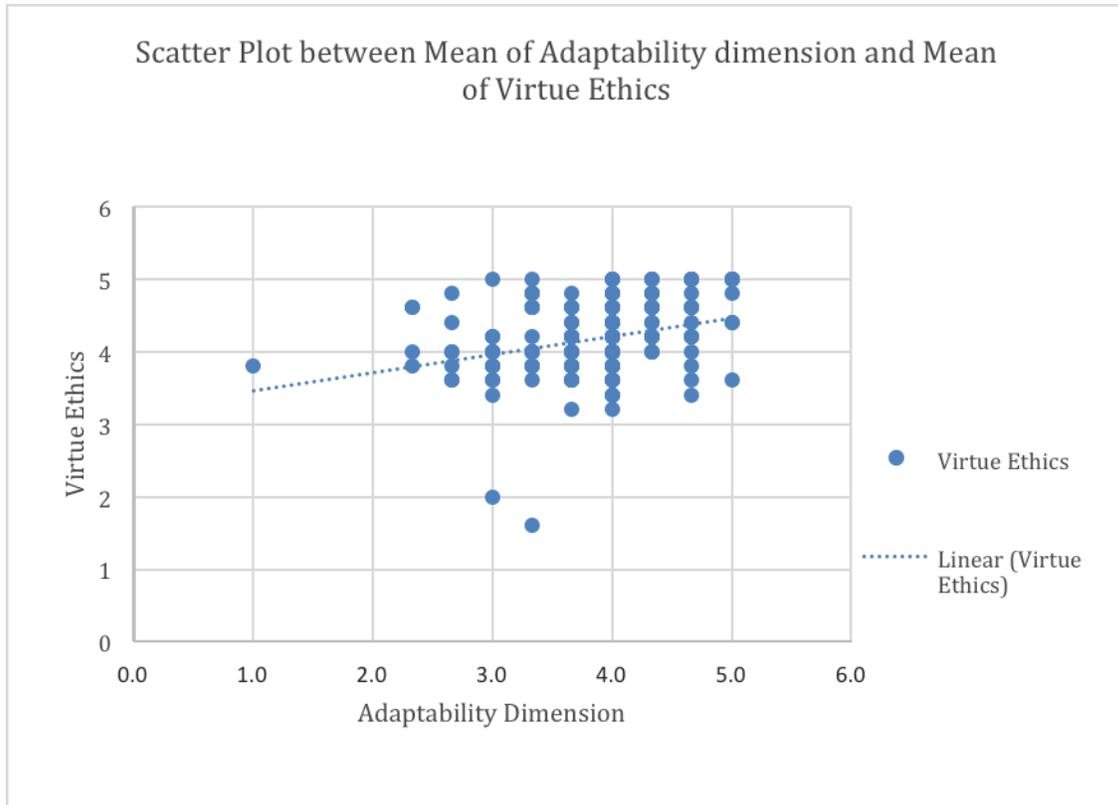


Figure 5. Scatter plot between the means of adaptability dimension and virtue ethics

Pearson product-moment correlation was performed to determine the extent to which the adaptability dimension of emotional intelligence was related to virtue ethics in accounting professionals. The result showed that there was not enough evidence to accept the null hypothesis. The alternative hypothesis was accepted as the mean of the adaptability dimension of EI was related to the mean of VE in accounting professionals with  $r = 0.3082$  and  $p < .0001$ . Therefore the correlation was statistically significant. Table 10 presents the correlational analysis.

Table 10. Correlation Between the Mean of Adaptability Dimension and Mean of Virtue Ethics

Pearson Correlation Coefficients, N = 208 Prob >  r  under H0: Rho=0		
	Adaptability Dimension	Virtue Ethics
Adaptability Dimension	1	0.3082 < .0001
Virtue Ethics	0.3082 < .0001	1

The analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant correlation between Q11, “I have the capacity to remain objective by seeing things as they really are”, and Q16, “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”, with  $r = 0.2399$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0005 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q17, “my values align with the organization’s values”, with  $r = 0.1677$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0155 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q18, “I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization”, with  $r = 0.2852$  and  $p \text{ value} < 0.0001 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q19, “I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment”, with  $r = 0.1976$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0042 < \alpha = 0.05$ , and Q20, “I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”, with  $r = 0.1891$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0062 < \alpha = 0.05$  (see Table 11).

Table 11 presents the inter-correlation between the adaptability composite of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics questions.

Table 11. Correlating Adaptability Composite with Virtue Ethics

Pearson Correlation Coefficients, N = 208 Prob >  r  under H0: Rho=0					
	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
Q11	0.2399	0.1677	0.2852	0.1976	0.1891
	0.0005	0.0155	< .0001	0.0042	0.0062
Q12	0.1357	0.1587	0.1709	0.1354	0.0799
	0.0507	0.0219	0.0136	0.0512	0.2516
Q13	0.2096	0.1716	0.2190	0.1281	0.1788
	0.0024	0.0132	0.0015	0.0652	0.0098

The analysis revealed a statistically significant correlation between Q12, “It’s easy for me to make adjustments in general”, and Q17, with  $r = 0.1587$  and  $p$  value =  $0.0219 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q18 with  $r = 0.1709$  and  $p$  value =  $0.0136 < \alpha = 0.05$ . Q12 was not statistically related to Q16, Q19 and Q20 (see Table 11). Also, the result showed a statistically significant correlation between Q13, “I am able to find solutions to problems where emotions are involved”, and Q16, with  $r = 0.2096$  and  $p$  value =  $0.0024 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q17, with  $r = 0.1716$  and  $p$  value =  $0.0132 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q18, with  $r = 0.2190$  and  $p$  value =  $0.0015 < \alpha = 0.05$ , and Q20, with  $r = 0.1788$  and  $p$  value =  $0.0098 < \alpha = 0.05$ . The result revealed no significant correlation between Q13 and Q19, with  $r = 0.1281$  and  $p$  value =  $0.0652 > \alpha = 0.05$ . The conclusion from the analysis was that adaptability

dimension of emotional intelligence was significantly related to virtue ethics when one has the capabilities to remain objective. Also, emotional intelligence is related to virtue ethics when one is resilient and aligned with the organization's values.

**Research question 5.** To what extent is the general mood dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

*Hypothesis:*

*Ho: The general mood dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting professionals.*

*Ha: The general mood dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting professionals.*

The trend line shows a positive linear relationship between the means of general mood dimension of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics. This means that as the mean of general mood dimension increases, the mean of virtue ethics also increases. Figure 6 shows the scatter plot between the mean of general mood dimension and mean of virtue ethics.

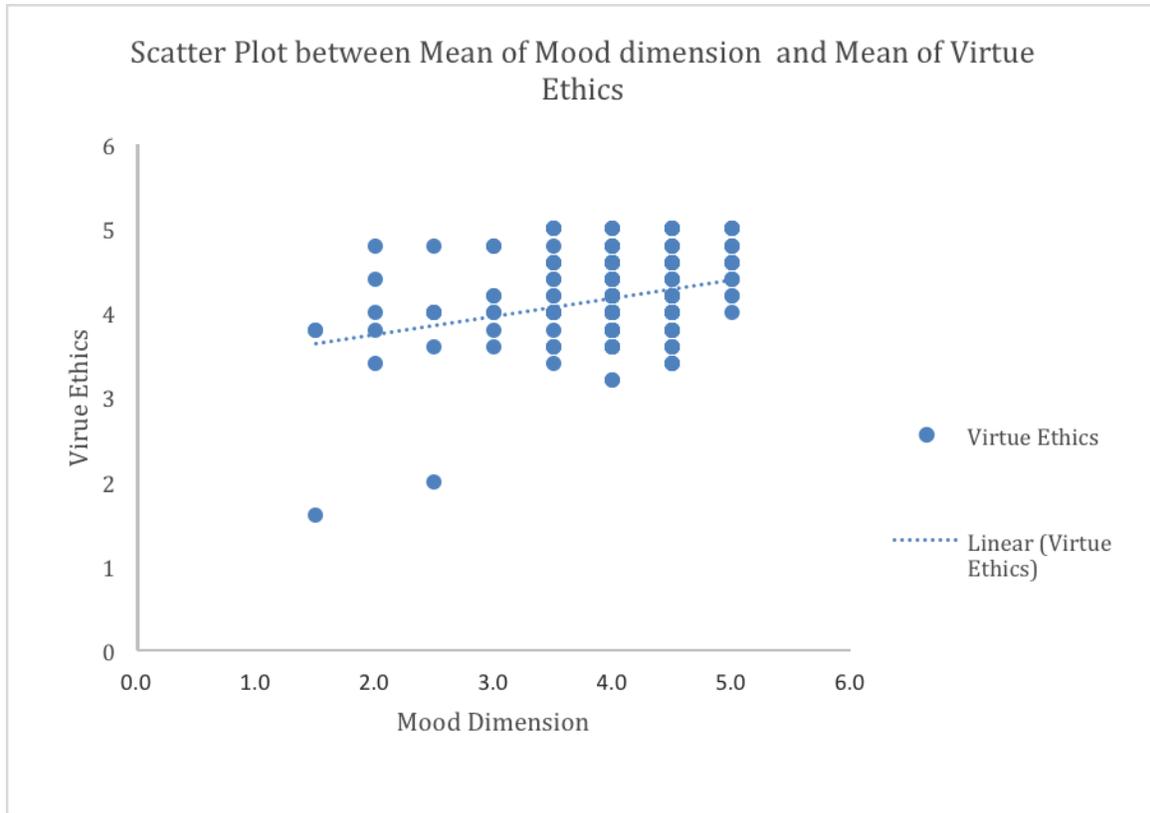


Figure 6. Scatter plot between the means of general mood dimension and virtue ethics

Pearson product-moment correlation was performed to observe the extent to which general mood dimension of EI was related to VE in accounting professionals. The result showed that there was not enough evidence to accept the null hypothesis. The alternative hypothesis was accepted that the mean of general mood dimension of EI was related to the mean of VE in accounting professionals with  $r = 0.3079$  and  $p < .0001 < \alpha = 0.05$ .

Table 12 presents the correlational analysis.

Table 12. Correlation Between the Mean of General Mood Dimension and Mean of Virtue Ethics

Pearson Correlation Coefficients, N = 208 Prob >  r  under H0: Rho=0		
	Mood Dimension	Virtue Ethics
Mood Dimension	1	0.3079 < .0001
Virtue Ethics	0.3079 < .0001	1

The analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant correlation between Q14, “I remain hopeful and resilient despite occasional setbacks”, and Q16, “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”, with  $r = 0.2184$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0015 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q18, “I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization” with  $r = 0.2855$  and  $p \text{ value} < 0.0001 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q19, “I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment”, with  $r = 0.1759$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0110 < \alpha = 0.05$ , and Q20, “I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”, with  $r = 0.2208$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.0013 < \alpha = 0.05$ . The result showed no significant correlation between Q14 and Q17, with  $r = 0.1001$  and  $p \text{ value} = 0.1503 > \alpha = 0.05$ .

Table 13 presents the inter-correlation between general mood composite of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics questions.

Table 13. Correlating General Mood Composite with Virtue Ethics

Pearson Correlation Coefficients, N = 208 Prob >  r  under H0: Rho=0					
	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
Q14	0.2184	0.1001	0.2855	0.1759	0.2208
	0.0015	0.1503	< .0001	0.0110	0.0013
Q15	0.3046	0.1464	0.1496	0.1239	0.1609
	< .0001	0.0347	0.0309	0.0745	0.0202

The analysis showed a statistically significant correlation between Q15, “I am satisfied, content and enjoy many aspects of my life”, and Q16, with  $r = 0.3046$  and  $p$  value  $< 0.0001 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q17, with  $r = 0.1464$  and  $p$  value  $= 0.0347 < \alpha = 0.05$ , Q18, with  $r = 0.1496$  and  $p$  value  $= 0.0309 < \alpha = 0.05$ , and Q20, with  $r = 0.1609$  and  $p$  value  $= 0.0202 < \alpha = 0.05$ . The result showed no significant correlation between Q14 and Q19, with  $r = 0.1239$  and  $p$  value  $= 0.0745 > \alpha = 0.05$ . The conclusion from the analysis was that the general mood dimension of EI is positively related to VE except that being hopeful and resilient despite occasional setbacks is not related to aligning ones values with the organization’s values. Also, the belief that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment does not relate to the feeling of being satisfied, content and enjoying many aspects of one life.

## Summary of Primary Results

Chapter 4 reported the results from the data composed and analyzed from 208 accounting professionals employed in the United States. Data were composed and examined for the intention of exploring the association between EI and VE in accounting professionals. The EQ-i and EEQ instruments were utilized to access the variables of EI and VE.

The hypothesis testing through Pearson correlation validated the alternative hypothesis and rejected the null hypothesis by identifying significant positive and negative correlations between EI and VE. Significant correlations were identified overall between the EI and VE variables. However, there were a few instances where the EI and VE variables were not related when individual questions were examined.

Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings of this research relative to existing literature. Conclusions, implications, and recommendations resulting from this research study are presented. Finally, suggestions for future research are presented.

## **CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS**

Chapter 5 provides a synopsis of the study, reviews the purpose, and encompasses a dialogue of the results in Chapter 4. The discussion of the findings is followed by conclusions, evaluation of assessment of emotional intelligent and virtue ethical leaders, implications for accounting organizational leadership, and recommendations for future research.

### **Summary of the study**

Emotional intelligence and virtue ethics connect to increase leadership and organizational effectiveness across an extensive assortment of areas. Emotionally intelligent and virtuous leaders contribute to improved workplace performance and an environment that fosters best practice (Diggins, 2004; Flynn, 2008). Persons with soaring emotional intelligence and virtue ethics are more probable to develop into valuable transformational leaders (Goleman, 2000). Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) showed an association between emotional intelligence, virtue ethics, leadership approach, and organizational performance. Accordingly, organizations guided by emotional intelligent and virtuous leadership, are more victorious. This study focused on exploring the relationship between EI and VE in accounting professionals. The gap and the problem in the study and scholarly literature arise from the reality that the relationship between EI and VE in the accounting industry is not known. This relationship is important for effective leadership and organizational success.

## Summary of Purpose

The intention of this quantitative, correlational research was to explore the association between EI and VE in accounting professionals in the United States. The variables in this study included the five dimensions of EI: intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability, general mood and one for virtue ethics. Pearson correlation was employed to ascertain the relationship between the variables. The two instruments utilized in the study were the EQ-i and EEQ, which were reliable instruments. This study filled a significant void in accounting research by exploring the EI and VE constructs.

## Discussion of Findings

The study sought to explore the relationship between EI and VE in accounting professionals. The five research questions were designed to focus the study on exploring the extent to which the interpersonal, intrapersonal, adaptability, general mood, stress management dimensions of EI were related to VE in accounting professionals. A discussion of the prominent findings associated with each research question and hypotheses follow.

**Research question1.** To what extent is the intrapersonal dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

*Hypothesis:*

*Ho: The intrapersonal dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting professionals.*

*Ha: The intrapersonal dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting professionals.*

The analysis from the the inter-correlation between the intrapersonal composite of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics questions revealed that there was a statistically significant correlation between “I’m in touch with my emotions”, and “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”; “my values align with the organization’s values”; “I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization”; “I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment”, and “I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”.

The analysis showed a statistically significant correlation between “It’s easy for me to tell people what I think” and “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”; “my values align with the organization’s values”; “I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization”, and “ I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”. “It’s easy for me to tell people what I think” was not significantly correlated to “I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment”.

The results showed a statistically significant negative correlation between “I tend to cling to others”, and “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”. “I tend to cling to others has a negative statistically insignificant correlation to my values align with the organization’s values”; “I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization”; “I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work

environment”, and “I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”.

The results revealed a statistically significant correlation between “I accomplish my goals”, and “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”; “my values align with the organization’s values”, and “I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”. “I accomplish my goals was not significantly correlated to I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization”, and “I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment”.

There was no significant correlation between “looking at both my good points and bad points, I think well of myself”, and “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”; “my values align with the organization’s values”; “I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization”; “I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment”, and “I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”.

The results of this analysis indicated that the intrapersonal dimension is positively related to VE; except that tending to cling to others, and looking at both my good and bad points; thinking well of one’s self are not related to VE.

**Research question 2.** To what extent is the interpersonal dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

*Hypothesis:*

*Ho: The interpersonal dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting professionals.*

*Ha: The interpersonal dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting professionals.*

The analysis from the inter-correlation between the interpersonal composite of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics questions revealed that there was a statistically significant correlation between “I value each person’s unique and individual needs”, and “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”; “my values align with the organization’s values”; “I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization”; “I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment”, and “I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”.

The results showed a statistically significant correlation between “I care about the community, act responsibly and have social consciousness”; and “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”; “my values align with the organization’s values”; “I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization”; “I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment”; and “I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”.

Moreover, the results portrayed a statistically significant correlation between “I have good relationships with others”, and “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”; “my values align with the

organization's values"; "I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization, and I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees". However, the results showed no significant correlation between having good relationships with others, and open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment.

The conclusion from the analysis was that the interpersonal dimension of EI was positively related to VE except that having a good relationship with others is not related to the belief that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment.

**Research question 3.** To what extent is the stress management dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

*Hypothesis:*

*Ho: The stress management dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting professionals.*

*Ha: The stress management dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting professionals.*

Pearson product-moment correlation was performed to determine the extent to which the stress management dimension of EI was related to VE in accounting professionals. The result showed that there was not enough evidence to accept the null hypothesis. The alternative hypothesis was accepted that the mean of the stress management dimension of emotional intelligence was related to the mean of virtue ethics in accounting professionals with  $r = 0.1743$  and  $p = .0118 < \alpha = 0.05$ . Therefore the correlation is statistically significant.

The analysis from the inter-correlation between the stress management composite of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics questions revealed that there was a statistically significant correlation between “I can handle stress without getting too nervous”, and “I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”. There was no significant correlation between “I can handle stress without getting too nervous”, and “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”; “my values align with the organization’s values”; “I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization”, and “I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment”.

The analysis revealed a statistically significant correlation between “I know how to keep calm in difficult situations”, and “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”, and “I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization”. The results showed no significant correlation between “I know how to keep calm in difficult situations”, and “my values align with the organization’s values”; “I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment”, and “I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”.

The conclusion from the above analysis was that stress management dimension of emotional intelligence was positively related to virtue ethics when management seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment their employees are happier

and can manage their stress. Also, the ability to keep calm in difficult situations can lead to consistent and resilient ethical actions in an organization.

**Research question 4.** To what extent is the adaptability dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

*Hypothesis:*

*Ho: The adaptability dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting professionals.*

*Ha: The adaptability dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting professionals.*

Pearson product-moment correlation was performed to resolve the extent to which the adaptability dimension of EI was related to VE in accounting professionals. The result showed that there was not enough evidence to accept the null hypothesis. The alternative hypothesis was accepted as the mean of the adaptability dimension of emotional intelligence was related to the mean of Virtue ethics in accounting professionals with  $r = 0.3082$  and  $p < .0001$ . Therefore the correlation was statistically significant.

The analysis from inter-correlation between the adaptability composite of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics questions revealed that there was a statistically significant correlation between “I have the capacity to remain objective by seeing things as they really are”, and “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”; “my values align with the organization’s values”; “I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization”; “I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment”, and “I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”.

The analysis also revealed a statistically significant correlation between “It’s easy for me to make adjustments in general”; and “my values align with the organization’s values”, and “I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization”. “It’s easy for me to make adjustments in general” was not statistically related to “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”; “I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment”, and “I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”.

The results displayed a statistically significant correlation between “I am able to find solutions to problems where emotions are involved”, and “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”; “my values align with the organization’s values”; “I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization”, and “I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”. There was no significant correlation between “the ability to find solutions to problems where emotions are involved”, and “I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment”.

The conclusion from the analysis was that adaptability dimension of emotional intelligence was significantly related to Virtue ethics when one has the capabilities to remain objective. Also, when an individual is able to make adjustments easily this means that one is resilient and aligned with the organization’s values.

**Research question 5.** To what extent is the general mood dimension of EI related to VE in accounting professionals?

*Hypothesis:*

*Ho: The general mood dimension of EI is not related to VE in accounting professionals.*

*Ha: The general mood dimension of EI is related to VE in accounting professionals.*

Pearson product-moment correlation was performed to verify the extent to which general mood dimension of EI was related to Virtue ethics in accounting professionals. The result showed that there was not enough evidence to accept the null hypothesis. The alternative hypothesis was accepted that the mean of general mood dimension of EI was related to the mean of VE in accounting professionals with  $r = 0.3079$  and  $p < .0001 < \alpha = 0.05$ .

The analysis from the inter-correlation between general mood composite of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics questions further revealed that there was a statistically significant correlation between “I remain hopeful and resilient despite occasional setbacks”; and “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”; “I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization”; “I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment” and, “I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”. There was no significant correlation between, “I remain hopeful and resilient despite occasional setbacks and my values align with the organization’s values”.

The results showed a statistically significant correlation between “I am satisfied, content and enjoy many aspects of my life”; and “my ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals”; “my values align with the organization’s values”; “I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization”; and “I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees”. In addition, the analysis revealed no significant correlation between “I am satisfied, content and enjoy many aspects of my life”, and “I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment”.

The conclusion from the research analysis was that the general mood dimension of EI is positively related to VE except that being hopeful and resilient despite occasional setbacks are not related to aligning ones values with the organization’s values. Also, the belief that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment does not relate to the feeling of being satisfied, content and enjoying many aspects of one life.

### **Conclusions**

This study focused on exploring the relationship between EI and VE in accounting professionals. While many studies have explored EI and VE separately, no study has explored the relationship of EI and VE in the accounting profession. Emotional intelligence and virtue ethics sustains the enhancement of transformational leadership, and a combination of the transformational approach and emotional intelligence and virtue ethics qualities have the authority to expand work accomplishment (Leban & Zulauf,

2004). Butler and Chinowsky (2006) scrutinized the association connecting the activities of leaders; EI and VE project managers in a construction organization. Compassion and interpersonal abilities were established as major EI and VE behaviors in which construction business executives needed development if the industry was to achieve more viable improvement in the future (Butler & Chinowsky, 2006). In the same vein, as accounting organizations comprehend and accept the advantages of well-defined communication, honesty and the prominence of credulous dealings in industry, the more they will attain success.

The most significant results of these findings were the confirmation of a statistically significant relationship between EI and VE in accounting professionals for all dimensions. More specifically, the intrapersonal dimension of EI, which signifies self-awareness and self-expression, is related to virtue ethics wherein an individual's moral actions are intended to produce outcomes that have excellence at the core. The findings indicated a positive significant relationship ( $p < .05$ ) between intrapersonal dimension and virtue ethics. The results of this analysis indicated that the intrapersonal dimension is positively related to VE except that tending to cling to others, and "looking at both my good and bad points and thinking well of one's self" are not related to VE. While EI and VE have been linked to improve decision-making, recent studies by Karp and Helgo (2008) asserted that accomplished leadership and leading requires reviewing one's knowledge when connecting to individuals. Therefore, competencies in leadership that connect to the EI and VE domain demonstrate that successful leadership requires the development of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics abilities.

Second, the conclusion from the analysis was that the interpersonal dimension of EI was positively related to virtue ethics except that having a good relationship with others is not related to the belief that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment. An example in which emotional intelligence and virtue ethics will produce effective leadership is the compassion shown by leaders. Corona (2010) explained that compassion is given by leadership when employees are not judged for undertaking risk, and when leadership train employees to realize personal goals. In a study conducted by Neff (2003) empathy shown towards an individual produced feelings, social connectedness, and ethical conduct in organizations. The capacity to recognize the position of employees is vital to leadership capabilities to support and foster relationship (Carney & Harrigan, 2003). This quality is apparent in leaders as they identify with the feelings of employees and show consideration towards them (Bass, 1990). In addition, leadership imagines they can influence the environments and take the initiative to lead transformation (Sosik & Megerian, 1999). EI and VE are important competencies for accounting leadership for the development of their cohorts' attitudes toward effective leadership. As workers think they are admired for their labors this allows ethical behavior and superior work performance.

Effective leadership is also consummated by group solidity. Group solidity is an attribute of an emotional intelligent and virtuous leader. Leaders, who can sway, inspire and encourage their employees by promoting integrity, promote group solidity (Ashkanasy, Hartel & Daus, 2002; Flynn, 2008). According to Dubois (2007) for virtues to flourish, an infrastructure needs to be established wherein one cannot think for himself, but only by participation in a community that one becomes rational. Transformational

leaders with elevated EI and VE are more receptive to their cohorts' outlook and feelings (Ashkanasy et al., 2002; Singh, 2010). As leaders show empathy to their cohorts, they better value their cohorts' thoughts that boost their wishes to remain a part of the community. Emotional intelligent leaders regulate and control their feelings and their cohorts' feelings (Ashkanasy et al., 2002). As a result, they are dynamic and arouse cohorts' behavior by supporting a team image that emphasizes the lasting goals for the group. Supporters of transforming leadership are dedicated to the common interest and endeavor for attaining group goals (Ashkanasy et al., 2002). Hence, leadership with greater levels of EI and VE buttress leadership performances and encourage a more unified group.

Third, the conclusion drawn from the analysis was that the stress management dimension of emotional intelligence was positively related to virtue ethics when management seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment their employees are happier and can manage their stress. Also, the ability to keep calm in difficult situations can lead to consistent and resilient ethical actions in an organization. The authority to direct emotion and handle doubts is an additional imperative aspect of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics for effective leadership. Luthans (2007; Salovey and Grewal (2005) posited that emotional intelligence and virtue ethics might also afford effective leadership as persons normalize their emotions to handle tension, perform under difficulty, and acclimatize to organizational transformation. Thus, if accounting professionals are emotionally intelligent and virtuous this will motivate optimistic behaviors and create constructive functioning environments in an organization. While emotional intelligence is the authority to recognize at what time to express an emotion as

well as calculating it, virtue ethics helps us not only to do the right thing, but also to enjoy doing the right thing. Khosravi et al. (2011) contended that leadership must manage their emotional state, direct, and discover avenues to develop manner and actions. Effective leadership is beneficial to managers who can direct their emotions, shun spontaneous responses to troubles, and regulate moral dilemmas that lead to effective outcomes (Dunbar, 2005; Khosravi et al., 2011). As such, emotional intelligent and virtuous organizational leaders will establish an environment of harmony in which their cohorts will also become psychologically steady. Colfax et al. (2010) posited that it is the individual ingredient that will create a flourishing organization in the global environment.

Fourth, the conclusion from the analysis was that adaptability dimension of emotional intelligence was significantly related to virtue ethics when one has the capabilities to remain objective. Also, when an individual is able to make adjustments easily, this means that one is resilient and aligned with the organization's values.

Lastly, the conclusion from the analysis was that the general mood dimension of EI is positively associated to VE except that being hopeful and resilient despite occasional setbacks are not related to aligning ones values with the organization's values. Also, the belief that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment does not relate to the feeling of being satisfied, content and enjoying many aspects of one life. Learned optimism established by Martin Seligman related to the contributory associations citizens practice through a delay or adversity (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Luthans (2007) suggested that optimism is a significant predictor of virtue ethics. Hopeful organizational leaders formulate explicit

contributions to produce effective leadership than pessimistic leaders (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). As a result, if a deficiency in optimism is evident in the accounting organizational the leadership cannot realize the optimal vision for the entity.

### **Evaluation of Assessment of Emotional Intelligent and Virtue ethical Leaders**

Since, EI and VE are important to organizational leaders; evaluation and assessment becomes very valuable. Organizational leaders must frequently review and re-examine their principal abilities, their character qualities, ethical virtues and their information base (Colfax et al., 2010). Likewise, numerous procedures are novel but the psychological properties are unknown. The investigator presents a synopsis summarizing the more accepted devices.

The MSCEIT is a dependable instrument that evaluates an assortment of EI abilities (Mestre, Lopes, Salovey, & Gil-Olarte, 2006). This tool measures the capabilities to recognize, employ, realize, and direct emotions. The chief essentials of the measurement, links to accepting complex emotions, discernment, direction of the emotions, assessment of thoughts, and directing outlook (McEnrue & Groves, 2006). The outcome of a research conducted on business students in a managed locale suggests that this instrument is an efficient measurement tool for improving leadership (McEnrue & Groves, 2006). This measurement moves in harmony with the emotions but is suitable to evaluate observed (abilities to identify emotions) and planned EI (abilities to recognize and direct emotions) (Mestre et al., 2006). This measurement produces images such as faces, pictures, and conceptual illustrations utilized for evaluating emotional awareness.

Thus, the MSCEIT measurement device is practical in teaching leaders to develop group solidarity and build stronger teams.

The EQ-i device encompasses emotional well-being having 15 elements. The instrument consists of dimension with five elements (Bar-On, 1997). The interpersonal essentials consist of elements associated with how leaders take care of their cohorts. In addition, adaptability essentials consist of elements connected to problem solving, and general mood elements include qualities such as optimistic attitudes on existence. The stress control factors consist of knowing how to undergo changes and the intrapersonal essentials consist of elements related to character.

The Bar-On measurement tool is another instrument for reviewing different features of individual actions imperative for job related performance and effectiveness (Bar-On, 2005). The application of this instrument assists leadership in comprehending self (Colfax et al., 2010). For example, Stein, Papdogiannis, Yip, and Sitarenios (2009) posited that research linking higher level management showed that in the areas of compromising techniques, temperament, and elasticity they scored higher in EI levels than the general population. Also the EI assessment for problem solving self-interest, and empathy elates to productivity (Stein et al., 2009). This device is advantageous to organizational leaders as they steer their workers and operations to realize competitive advantages.

Further, scholars such as Goleman and Boyatzis established the ECI comprises of 110 elements with four essential dimensions that evaluate 20 competencies - self-management, self-control, self-awareness, social skills (Turner & Lloyd-Walker, 2008). This measurement supports both the person and spectator in creating a simple procedure

simple for individuals to utilize (Turner & Lloyd-Walker, 2008). In addition, the proposal and attainment abilities could develop IQ in individuals. As a result, this measurement is useful for more than just emotional intelligence qualities.

### **Implications for Accounting Organizational leadership**

Emotional intelligence and virtue ethics are vital for leadership in organizations leaders in the present, vibrant, and changing workplace. Leaders desire the aptitude to sway individual performance for achieving a preferred objective (Yunus, Ghazali, & Hassan, 2011). EI and VE consciousness will protect the equipoise required for leadership in the universal business atmosphere (Colfax et al., 2010). George (2000) asserted that the purpose of an influential leader was to comprehend the emotions of workers which play a significant part of leadership. In addition, Goleman (1995) proposed that self-management, self-awareness, empathy, social skills, and self-motivation are traits for emotional intelligence. Various abilities such as learned optimism, the authority to direct thoughts, to handle pressure, to manage feeling and compassion are significant for effective leadership. Effective leadership encompasses leadership and employee performance; group structure, group solidity, value realization, designation, and organizational productivity.

Furthermore, Ashkanasy et al. (2002) argued that the essentials of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics emulate the activities of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership are supportive of high performance opportunities, generate and communicate ideas; afford a role model, support group efforts, offer personal sustenance endeavors, offer scholarly inspiration, and encourage personal integrity (Bar-

On & Parker, 2000; Boseman, 2008). Consequently, emotional intelligence and virtue ethics are important competencies for leaders in getting their group to be industrious and produce competitive advantages for organizational accomplishment.

An assessment of the literature showed that emotional intelligence and virtue ethics may have various leadership implications. Results from the research in the literature review illustrate that leaders who develop their EI and VE competencies can also develop their attitudes utilizing transformational leadership (Corona, 2010). In addition, training is victorious in increasing emotional intelligence and virtue ethics among followers and leaders (Groves, McEnrue, & Shen, 2008).

People can improve in EI and VE competencies. Colfax et al. (2010) contended that not everyone has leadership qualities but everyone can be trained to possess leadership skills. For instance, the Bar-On assessment can be utilized by human resources for training, succession planning, and employing to improve employee efficiency and organizational productivity (Bar-On, 2005). The aptitudes utilized enhance EI in areas such as well-being, self-actualization, and individual effectiveness (Bar-On, 2005). Colfax et al. (2010) contended that abilities increase with applications of lessons learnt and experience.

In addition, according to Turner and Lloyd-Walker (2008) increasing EI and VE abilities may support the improvement of leadership skills. The mechanisms that emotional intelligence education supports are authority, support, and consideration. Another mechanism called rational encouragement relates further to ordinary intelligence and not improved through emotional intelligence guidance (Leban & Zulauf, 2004). Furthermore, Leban and Zulauf (2004) recommended an investigation on how instruction

and guidance could help in increasing transformational leadership skills, EI, and VE abilities. The growth and relevance of emotional and virtue ethics abilities in the business environment, helps to normalize the emotions and ethical behaviors, which can direct improved work fulfillment and performance. Several United States government offices as well as Johnson and Johnson use the ECI and ECQ (Ethical Climate Questionnaire for leadership preparation (Koumbiadis, Conway & Angel, 2011; Turner & Lloyd-Walker, 2008).

The application of Goleman's ECI tool and EEQ tool shows improvements in job accomplishment, work efficiency, and an improvement in emotional fitness indicating that the growth of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics qualities can undoubtedly influence workers (Turner & Lloyd-Walker, 2008). As a result, accounting organizational leaders should suggest training and offer the time needed for workers to increase self-confidence in applying the recently acquired information and abilities. EI and VE have an effect on both emotional and physical wellbeing as well as on professional accomplishment (Goleman, 1995).

The significance of EI and VE for effective organizational success has been a subject as organizations struggle to develop performance and lead successfully (Wang & Huang, 2009). The assessment of the literature review provides confirmation that emotionally intelligent and virtuous leaders are in contact with their individual emotions and those of their cohorts (Aslan, Ozata, & Mete, 2008). A lesson concerning acme managers shows that EI skills connect to work performance (Stein et al., 2009). For instance, superior managers ranked drastically higher than the ordinary individuals in entirety, in the areas of general mood, adaptability, and intrapersonal as well as in diverse

scales (Stein et al., 2009). Besides, emotional intelligent scores for self regard, reality tests, problem solving, and empathy connect to effectiveness (Stein et al., 2009). The outcome of the investigative study leadership instruction should persuade the improvement of emotional intelligence and virtue ethics skills that may be helpful in supporting leaders to accomplish their capabilities.

### **Recommendation for Future Research**

Future research can ascertain differences in the emotional intelligence and virtue ethics traits across genders and internationally. Much can be gained from a further study of the emotional intelligence and virtue ethics character traits to decide on a combination of these two actions to generate improved transformational leaders in accounting organizations. In addition, further research stands much to gain if leadership reviews the collective, emotional improvement and ethical virtues of younger managers throughout the hiring process. An attractive area to investigate is for accounting organizations to adapt their recruiting processes to include more emotional and virtue ethics administrative tools geared toward attentiveness, organization of self, administration of interaction and collective environment, and ‘virtues of character’ such as honesty, fairness, prudence and courage.

Numerous EI procedures are established in the literature. The main universal procedures are: the MSCEIT, the Goleman's ECI model, and the Bar-On model. Studies illustrate numerous versions of emotional intelligence tools that are considered in diverse ways. The disparities involving the emotional intelligence procedures have brought about debate in considering validity. The Bar-On model comprises of personality traits related

to wellbeing, the MSCEIT an ability model solves problems using emotions and the Goleman's ECI a mixed model. Bar-On (2005) contended that models offered merely gave a partial outlook of an individual's emotionally and collectively intellectual performance. Accordingly, an assumption is that the Goleman's form may possibly be a more appropriate form for evaluating the emotional intelligence in organizational leadership (Corona, 2010). Future research could use Goleman's model to ascertain the relationship between EI and VE in accounting professionals.

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## APPENDIX A. STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL WORK

### Academic Honesty Policy

Capella University's Academic Honesty Policy ([3.01.01](#)) holds learners accountable for the integrity of work they submit, which includes but is not limited to discussion postings, assignments, comprehensive exams, and the dissertation or capstone project.

Established in the Policy are the expectations for original work, rationale for the policy, definition of terms that pertain to academic honesty and original work, and disciplinary consequences of academic dishonesty. Also stated in the Policy is the expectation that learners will follow APA rules for citing another person's ideas or works.

The following standards for original work and definition of *plagiarism* are discussed in the Policy:

Learners are expected to be the sole authors of their work and to acknowledge the authorship of others' work through proper citation and reference. Use of another person's ideas, including another learner's, without proper reference or citation constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty and is prohibited conduct. (p. 1)

Plagiarism is one example of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own. Plagiarism also includes copying verbatim or rephrasing ideas without properly acknowledging the source by author, date, and publication medium. (p. 2)

Capella University's Research Misconduct Policy ([3.03.06](#)) holds learners accountable for research integrity. What constitutes research misconduct is discussed in the Policy:

Research misconduct includes but is not limited to falsification, fabrication, plagiarism, misappropriation, or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the academic community for proposing, conducting, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. (p. 1)

Learners failing to abide by these policies are subject to consequences, including but not limited to dismissal or revocation of the degree.

### Statement of Original Work and Signature

I have read, understood, and abided by Capella University's Academic Honesty Policy ([3.01.01](#)) and Research Misconduct Policy ([3.03.06](#)), including the Policy Statements, Rationale, and Definitions.

I attest that this dissertation or capstone project is my own work. Where I have used the ideas or words of others, I have paraphrased, summarized, or used direct quotes following the guidelines set forth in the *APA Publication Manual*.

Mentor name

and school Dr. Judith Forbes, Capella University

Learner signature

and date Jacent Gayle 11/14/2013

## APPENDIX B. SURVEY INSTRUMENT

From “ Enhancing ethics at workplace through emotional intelligence: An exploratory study on business organizations in India,” by K. Singh, 2011, *International Journal of Business and Management Science*, 4(1), 51-73. Copyright 2011 by Sonya Safa. Partially adapted with permission.

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<b>Dissertation Title</b>		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
A quantitative study of the relationship between emotional intelligence and virtue ethics in accounting professionals Instructions Read each statement and decide which one of the five responses best describes how you think. Mark your choices by filling in the circle containing the number that corresponds to your answer.						
<b>Part 1</b>		1	2	3	4	5
<b>Intrapersonal Composite</b>						
1	Self Regard: Looking at both my good points and bad points, I think well of myself					
2	Emotional Self-Awareness: I’m in touch with my emotions					
3	Assertiveness: It’s easy for me to tell people what I think					
4	Independence: I tend to cling to others					
5	Self- Actualization: I accomplish my goals					
<b>Interpersonal Composite</b>						
6	Empathy: I value each person’s unique and individual needs					
7	Social Responsibility: I care about the community, act responsibly and have social consciousness					
8	Interpersonal Relationship: I have good relationships with others					
<b>Stress Management Composite</b>						
9	Stress Tolerance: I can handle stress without getting too nervous					

10	Impulse Control: I know how to keep calm in difficult situations					
<b>Adaptability Composite</b>						
11	Reality Testing: I have the capacity to remain objective by seeing things as they really are					
12	Flexibility: It's easy for me to make adjustments in general					
13	Problem Solving: I am able to find solutions to problems where emotions are involved					
<b>General Mood Composite</b>						
14	Optimism: I remain hopeful and resilient despite occasional setbacks					
15	Happiness: I am satisfied, content and enjoy many aspects of my life					
<b>Virtue Ethics</b>						
16	My ethical beliefs are consistent with my actions in assisting the organization achieve its goals.					
17	My values align with the organization's values					
18	I believe that being resilient can lead to ethical behavior in an organization.					
19	I believe that open communications and opportunities for discussion are important for an ethical work environment.					
20	I believe that a management that seeks to maintain an ethically robust and fair working environment will have happy employees.					

## **Part 2- Demographic Questions**

**Q21. How many years have you been with your current accounting organization?**

**(Select one)**

- Less than 2 years
- 2 years to 5 years
- 6 years to 10 years
- 11 years to 15 years
- 16 years or more

**Q22. What best describes your position within your accounting organization?**

- Senior Executive
- Vice President
- Director
- Manager
- Supervisor
- Staff
- Other

**Q23. Please indicate your highest educational level obtained.**

- Some High School
- High School
- Associate Degree
- Bachelor Degree
- Some Graduate or Professional Studies
- Graduate Degree or Professional Certification

**Q24. What industry best describes your accounting organization?**

- Manufacturing
- Communications
- Commercial
- Public
- Non-profit
- Other

**Q25. How many people does your accounting organization employ?**

- Less than 500
- 500 to 1,000
- 1,001 – 5,000

- 5,001 to 25,000
- More than 25,000