Beyond Generic Skills to Emotional Intelligence in Accounting Education: The Implications of the Commonalities and Differences between the Two Constructs

Lyn Daff
Avondale College of Higher Education

Professor Paul de Lange
RMIT University

Professor Beverley Jackling
Victoria University

Abstract

Embedding generic skills such as communication and teamwork in the accounting curriculum continues to attract attention from stakeholders. In parallel, the business world and more recently some faculty, have recognized and explored the need to incorporate emotional intelligence (EI) in the curriculum. EI is viewed as a desirable quality as it allows accountants to excel in strategic decision making, teamwork, leadership and client relations. We contend that in the quest to find the best employees, employers have focused on these skills whereas accounting faculty have placed less emphasis on EI skill development. This paper addresses the need for accountants to have a combination of EI and generic skills. The juxtaposition of an EI construct and a generic skills construct enables the development of a conceptual schema of the commonalities and differences between the two. This approach provides guidance for those faculty seeking to develop more employable graduates.

Key words: Education of accountants; Generic skills, Emotional intelligence