

THE EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND MINDFULNESS ON SELF-EFFICACY AMONGST WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING STUDENTS AT AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE FREE STATE

Workforce resilience and sustainable development necessitate WIL students to possess psychological resources that are crucial to thriving in today's rapidly changing BANI environment. The study explores the effect of key psychological resources, emotional intelligence (EI), and mindfulness on self-efficacy among work-integrated learning students at an institution of higher learning in the Free State. WIL serves as a critical bridge between academic knowledge and practical application; therefore this paper explores how EI and mindfulness jointly influence self-efficacy among WIL students, highlighting the importance of psychological resources in supporting students' confidence and competence so they can approach their academic and professional journeys with greater resilience and adaptability.

The study employed a quantitative research design, and data was collected from a sample of 204 work-integrated learning (WIL) students at an Institution of Higher Learning in the Free State. Using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), the study examined the direct effects of emotional intelligence on both mindfulness and self-efficacy, as well as the indirect effect of emotional intelligence on self-efficacy through mindfulness. Key findings suggest that emotional intelligence has a substantial impact on both mindfulness and self-efficacy, underscoring its pivotal role in promoting students' psychological resilience and academic performance. The results underscore the importance of promoting both emotional intelligence and mindfulness to equip students better with the mental and emotional tools necessary to thrive in WIL contexts.

The study contributes to the body of knowledge on the different psychological resources affecting WIL students and underscores the importance of why emotional intelligence and mindfulness training should be integrated into WIL student's curricula. Enhancing WIL students' self-efficacy will build their resilience and adaptability and equip them to handle the emotional and cognitive demands of their placements. This research offers valuable insights for students, higher education institutions and organisations seeking to promote the psychological capital of the future workforce.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Higher Education Institution, Mindfulness, Self-Efficacy

Author: MARKHAM, Lyle (University of the Free State)

Track Classification: Paper Presentations