Research Article

INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EFL TEACHERS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EQ) AND THEIR SELF-REGULATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigated the relationship between teacher's Emotional intelligence (EQ) and their self-regulation. Eighty-one EFL teachers working in English teaching institutes in different cities of Tehran took part in the study. They were selected based on convenient sampling procedure. Bar-On's EQ questionnaire and a valid self-regulation questionnaire were distributed among the participants. Since the distributions of the data were normal, Pearson correlation test was used to test the hypothesis. The results showed that there was a significant correlation between these two variables. In addition, further analysis showed that there were significant correlations between EQ and self-regulation elements. Finally, it can be concluded that developing and investing on EFL teacher's self-regulation may in turn lead to increased teacher self-regulation.

Keywords: EFL teachers, emotional intelligence, self-regulation, language institutes.

INTRODUCTION

There are many important factors which have led to the recognition of the importance of emotional competencies such as students' learning and academic success, a good rapport, and pro-social behaviors and lower involvement in irritating, aggressive, and violent behaviors (Seydi Shahivand and Shahab Moradkhani, 2019).

Accordingly, social emotional learning (SEL) programs are highly being carried out. Also, the positive effects on students' academic and social behaviors are highlighted. While many schools try to employ a "whole child" approach, educational programs tend to aim at increasing social emotional competencies, life skills, and general values which consist only a small part of school curricula. In addition, even in countries where the focus is on students' emotional intelligence (EI) development, teachers' own development has not been considered as an important issue (Khani and Ghasemi, 2019).

Altogether, recently a neglect of emotion is seen in the field of teaching (Hargreaves, 2001). The interdependence between cognition and emotions and the importance of emotions and emotional processes to thinking and decision making have been focused by the concept of Emotional Intelligence. A growing number of scholars have also highlighted the importance of teacher's EI competencies for teacher effectiveness. Emotionally intelligent teachers care about their class environment, and also they are able to create an emotional climate that enhance this matter and lead them to achieve their academic goals which have been set by themselves in advance (Ramana, 2013). EI, and in particular emotional self-awareness, allow teachers to recognize and understand their emotions in the classroom and to anticipate the effects of their emotional expressions on interactions with others. They also enable teachers to identify personal emotional difficulties and use reflective approach in negatively charged situations. They are then more able to regulate their emotions in interactions with students, to motive themselves and to react to students in an appropriate manner (Dewaele *et al.,* 2018).

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Emotion management is particularly important as teachers' non-regulated behaviors were noted to contribute to the creation of an unsafe and unpredictable environment for students, which, in turn, could negatively affect students' emotions (Ansarin *et al.,* 2015).

Furthermore, emotional self-awareness enables teachers to understand the emotions of others (Goleman, 1995) and to express interest, care, and empathy (Brackett *et al.,* 2009). Indeed, a large body of knowledge has pointed to interpersonal competencies, in particular empathy and interpersonal relationships, as crucial to teachers. Empathy and care were noted to affect teachers' ability to understand students' views and needs, to develop and maintain caring, meaningful, and supportive relationships with students, and to teach effectively. Positive teacher-student relationships have been noted to be an important element of quality teaching, providing students with stable, safe, supportive and pro-social classroom atmosphere which enhances overall growth, well-being, positive behaviors, motivation, and academic success (Toropova *et al.,* 2019). Emotional intelligence is important for both work life and personal life (Seydi Shahivand and Shahab Moradkhani, 2019)

In recent years, there has been growing empirical evidence that EI contributes significantly to performance and productivity. It can either enhance or inhibit performance and quality of work. Emotionally intelligent employees will produce work that meets the objectives of the organization, while workers who are less emotionally intelligent are unable to achieve the desired objectives. Due to the importance of self-regulation and emotional intelligence as determining factors in teaching context – both for the teachers and learners – this study is going to survey the relationship EFL instructors' emotional intelligence and their self-regulation. To this end a quantitative study is devised and correlational perspective is adopted to see if there exists a significant relationship between these variables.

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Sternberg, Lautrey, and Lubart (2002) conceptualize emotional intelligence as a confluence of learned abilities in wise behavior, high achievement, and mental health and state that emotionally intelligent

students are skilled in interpersonal communication, self-management, and goal achievement and demonstrate personal responsibility in completing assignments and working effectively. Mahmoodi *et al.,* (2019) provide empirical evidence on the relationship between EFL teachers' emotional intelligence, reflectivity, and autonomy, and their students' L2 performance. The results of multiple regression analysis showed that from among the variables of this study, reflectivity was the stronger predictor of the learners' L2 performance. In addition, the findings indicated that EFL teachers' educational degree and gender significantly affect their levels of emotional intelligence and reflectivity. The findings of this study offer evidence to substantiate teachers' emotional intelligence, reflectivity, and autonomy as important variables in L2 teaching and confirm their instructional nature.

Moradkhani, Raygan, and Moein (2017) mentioned that few studies have been conducted to explore the relationship between teachers' involvement in reflective practices and the enhancement of teachers' performance. Teacher autonomy is another variable, which was thought, by many researchers, to have a significant impact on teachers' instructional practice (Vahasantanen, 2015).

Gkonou and Mercer (2017) conducted a study with English teachers who were found to have high levels of emotional intelligence, and that gender and length of teaching experience were significant predictors of it. The findings also indicated that the participants with high emotional intelligence made use of their teaching experience and the past classroom experiences to interpret and respond to present classroom events and deal with the class accordingly. Dewaele and Mercer (2017) carried out a study with 513 EFL/ESL teachers and took variation in their self-reported attitudes towards their students into consideration. The findings revealed that teachers possessing high levels of trait emotional intelligence had more positive attitudes towards their students and appreciated and enjoyed their vivacious students more. In the context of Iran, Roohani and Mohammadi (2014) studied the association between teachers' emotional intelligence and learners' motivational attributes. In this study, thirty English teachers were required to complete Bar-On's (1997) Emotional Quotient Inventory.

Bar-On (1997) describes EI as "an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures" (p. 14). Salovey and Mayer (1990) took a different point of view about the concept of emotional intelligence and considered it as "handling of information about emotion and emotional reactions of people. They define emotional intelligence as the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (p. 189). They believe that emotional intelligence includes the information concerning recognition, construction, and regulation of emotion in oneself and others. Self-regulation was defined by Zimmerman and Schunk (2008) as ways in which learners control their own thoughts, feelings. Pressley (2007) explained this as an active process where students monitor their own learning and use strategies to clear up misunderstandings. Social cognitive researchers are interested in investigating how learners adapt to their context and continuously increase their knowledge and skills.

Howse *et al.,* (2003) suggested that disadvantaged students were unable to regulate tasks, which predicted their achievement score. Bandura stated in his 1997 writings that self-efficacy can be domain specific which allows a student to practice mathematical efficacy, but not reading efficacy. Therefore, the self-regulation of students is affected based on their expert knowledge and interests. Howse *et al.,* (2003) found that most preschoolers enter school with a positive demeanor but lose intrinsic motivation without the ability to regulate

their tasks or behaviors. Other researchers, such as Matuga (2009), looked at the difference between high school students taking college preparation courses online to earn college credit during summer break and those high school students who did not take a college courses online. Matuga (2009) found that even though all the students were ranked in the top of their class only those students who were classified as low achievers demonstrated an increase in their self-regulation score on the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) while the other students' scores declined on the self-regulation posttest. However, Matuga found that no one received an intervention or treatment; the students were either classified as self-regulated or not self-regulated.

The third party in the current study is the classroom teacher. Elias and MacDonald (2007) found a student's past performance was the biggest indicator of college academic success. In this research past performance was measured by the student's grade point average (GPA). Similarly, Baslanti and McCoach (2006) conducted a study investigating factors that contribute to gifted underachievers in the college setting. The results indicated that 72.5% of the underachievers had low self-motivation or regulation. The results of Baslanti and McCoach (2006) indicated that the effects of the study strategies on performance achieved a significant status as well as teaching format and test complexity on study strategies.

Tillema and Kremer-Hayon (2002) explored the strategies used by teachers to build self-regulated learners. Participants consisted of Dutch and Israeli educators, and both groups of participants yielded different results. However, both groups considered reflective practices appropriate for their students and themselves as educators. Additionally, Randi (2004) studied the relationship between student teachers' academic achievement and self-regulated learning styles. The results indicated that student teachers who had higher achievement practiced more self-regulation strategies and all levels and components of self-regulation. However, it is also important to note specific learning environments (e.g., cooperative grouping) support self-regulation practices (Randi, 2004). Furthermore, this empirical research is critical in helping teachers and administrators make decisions about instructional practices.

METHOD

The current study did its best to probe the relationship between EFL teachers' emotional intelligence and their self-regulation. To meet the goal of the study, this chapter provides a detailed account of the research regarding participants, instruments, design of the study, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

The participants of the study consisted of 81 English language institute teachers; 57 female and 24 male teachers in Tehran with at least 3 years of experience. They were either BA (n= 53) or MA (n= 28) holders in TEFL. Their ages will be above 25. The teachers were teaching at different levels in Karaj (n= 17), Damavand (n= 23), Andishe (n= 15) and Shahriar (n= 26). The participants were selected from the ones who volunteered to participate in this study. In other words, the researcher adopted a convenience sampling method in order to select the teachers. In this study, two data collection instruments were employed in order to come up with the required data. Each of these instruments is discussed below in detail. It should be noted that the language of data collection instruments was English. The reliability index of this inventory was calculated to be .86 using Cronbach alpha (Bar-On, 2006). According to the test manual, the score for each item was calculated and the added up to estimate the total EQ index. The index was inserted in the statistical software further calculation.

Procedure

Data collection procedure started with providing the teachers, who were willing to participate in the study, with the aim and purpose of the study. Then, they were asked to fill out the questionnaires. The questionnaires were filled when the researcher was present. It is worth mentioning that the questionnaires were filled in groups of three or four; however, the researcher stopped the participants from consulting. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between teachers' EQ and self-regulation. To this end, a correlational ex-post facto design was utilized. The variables of the study were measured on the interval scale.

In this study, the major data analysis procedure was correlational analysis. However, prior to using Pearson correlation test, the data were tabulated using descriptive statistical procedures and Shapiro-Wilk test was run to test the normality of the distribution of the data. SPSS 18 was used for data analysis.

RESULTS

This section is mainly dedicated to the thorough analysis of the results obtained from the administration of the questionnaire to 81 teachers of English as a foreign language. As mentioned earlier in chapter one the research question was as follows:

> *"Is there any significant relationship between EFL teachers' self-regulation and their emotional intelligence?"*
> *Based on this research question the following null hypothesis was formulated to be tested statistically:*
>
> *"There is no significant relationship between EFL teachers' self-regulation and their emotional intelligence."*
> *In order to test the hypothesis first the descriptive statistics for each item of the self-regulation questionnaire was calculated. The results are shown below.*

Table 1: Self-Regulation Inventory Descriptive Statistics

No.	Item	Factor	M	SD
1	I have the goal of researching what kinds of new strategies will help my students learn to become more responsible for their own learning.	Goal-setting	3.19	.754
2	I seek out professional opportunities that will influence my instructional practices as a way to reach my goal of continuously improving my practices.	Goal-setting	3.29	.657
3	My goals for this school year are to find other teachers who can coach or mentor me in more effective strategies for enhancing student learning outcomes.	Self-awareness	2.57	1.021
4	To meet my goals of helping students reach higher levels of learning, I seek to find and use new strategies/hands-on activities during my lessons.	Goal-setting	3.63	.601
5	When I implement new strategies, I take time to reflect on changes that might possibly need to be made for next time when using the strategy.	Self-monitoring	3.46	.689
6	I monitor how students react to new approaches and strategies I try out in the classroom.	Self-monitoring	3.47	.650
7	I track my progress toward reaching my instructional goals by keeping a journal or log.	Self-evaluation	1.83	.730
8	I keep notes on lessons to remind myself of changes to	Self-monitoring	3.85	.890
9	When I am having difficulty reaching some students, I examine how my own beliefs and attitudes may be getting in the way.	Self-awareness	3.93	.837
10	I engage my students in discussions of my practices so that I can become more aware of what students need and what changes I should make.	Self-awareness	3.72	1.075
11	If a student did not remember information from a previous lesson, I would know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson.	Self-awareness	3.97	.775
12	I alter my method of instruction after poor test results.	Self-evaluation	2.52	.639
13	I tailor my lessons based on follow-up I've had with students and/or their parents.	Self-evaluation	3.98	.875
14	After becoming more aware of changes I need to make in my instructional practices, I set up assessment strategies to measure the impact of these changes on student performance.	Self-evaluation	2.86	.854
15	I make it a point to compare my own and my students' assessments of my instructional practices as a way to evaluate how well I am doing.	Self-evaluation	3.91	.898
16	The feedback (nonverbal and verbal cues) I receive from students helps me determine the direction of my instruction.	self-monitoring	3.39	.719

Table 1 outlines the means and standard deviations for each of the questions on the Self-Regulation Inventory. The questions with the highest mean and the smallest amount of variance were 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 13. These questions were in reference to goal-setting (one question), self-monitoring (one question), self- awareness (three questions) and self-evaluation. The mean of each of these questions was above 3.5, while the questions with the smallest mean and largest variance were 7, 12, and 14 which are in reference to self-evaluation (three questions). More teachers claimed to become aware that and set goals evaluate their own behaviors. The lowest mean represented question 7 which stated that, "I track my progress toward reaching my instructional goals by keeping a journal or log," (*M* = 1.83, *SD* = .730) and represents the subtest area of self-evaluation.

Table 2: Teachers' Self-Regulation Statistics according to the Factors

Factor	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Goal-setting	1.00	5.00	3.38	.68
Self-monitoring	1.00	5.00	3.47	.71
Self-awareness	1.00	5.00	3.54	.93
Self-evaluation	1.00	5.00	3.02	.76

Table 2 shows the self-regulation data reported by 81 EFL teachers in working in language institutes. The descriptive statistics reported that most teachers practice self-awareness and self-monitoring more often than goal-setting and self-evaluation of their instructional practices. A mean of 3.38 was reported for goal-setting, 3.54 for self-awareness,

3.02 for self-evaluation and a mean of 3.47 was reported for self-monitoring. Table 3 provides the descriptive statistics of the data obtained from emotional intelligence questionnaire.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for Bar-On Questionnaire

Category	Mean	SD	Category	Mean	SD
Total score	332.08	3.80	Problem Solving	23.15	3.18
Happiness	22.96	4.35	Independence	21.97	3.17
Stress Tolerance	19.34	4.95	Self-Actualization	23.08	3.37
Emotional Self-Awareness	22.23	3.65	Reality Testing	20.16	3.96
Interpersonal Relationship	23.59	3.40	Optimism	22.91	3.94
Self-Regard	22. 95	3.50	Impulse Control	19.22	5.24
Flexibility	19.43	3.81	Responsibility	25.76	2.66
Empathy	24.79	3.07	Assertiveness	20.47	3.85

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics obtained from the 81 participants. The total mean score is reported (M= 332.08) and the standard deviation was equal to 3.80. Moreover, in order to have a better view of the learners' condition in terms of their emotional intelligence, the detailed descriptive statistical account of each category of the construct of the questionnaire was also reported.

According to table 3, the highest mean (25.76) was for responsibility and the lowest mean was for impulse control (19.22). Considering the means scores, empathy (24.79), problem solving (23.15) and self-actualization (23.08) come in the following ranks. In order to answer the research question, Shapiro-Wilk test was used in order to test the normality of the distribution of the data. The results are shown below.

Table 4: Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Emotional Intelligence	.937	81	.168
Self-regulation	.969	81	.636
Self-awareness	.966	81	.615
Self-monitoring	.949	81	.551
Goal-setting	.911	81	.701
Self-evaluation	.901	81	.692

As it is shown in table 4 the observed statistics for Emotional Intelligence (Z= .93, p= .16), self-regulation (Z= .96, p= .63), self-awareness (Z= .96, p= .61), self-monitoring (Z= .94, p= .55), goal-setting (Z= .91, p= .70) and self-evaluation (Z= .90, p= .69) are reported respectively. According to these statistics, since all the observed probability levels are over .05, it can be concluded that the distribution of data for all of the variables in this study are normal. Accordingly, parametric test should be used to test the research hypothesis. Since the study is of correlational type, Pearson correlation test was used to test the hypothesis of the study. In order to test the hypothesis, first Pearson correlation test was run in order to test the hypothesis. This test was run considering the overall scores obtained from self-regulation questionnaire and the emotional intelligence questionnaire. The following table shows the results.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Test for the Null Hypothesis

	N	r	p
Emotional intelligence – Self-regualtion	81	.72	.01

According to table 5, the observed correlation coefficient (r=.66, p-value=.04) is statistically significant and it can be concluded that the null hypothesis mentioned above is rejected. In other words, there is a positive correlation between self-regulation and emotional intelligence. Considering the original hypothesis mentioned above, it can be argued that the null hypothesis is rejected since the observed p value is smaller than .05.

However, in order to have a more thorough analysis of the results, the researcher ran Pearson correlation for four more times in order to discover the correlation between emotional intelligence of the language teachers and their self-regulation regarding each component of the self-regulation reported previously in table 6. The results are shown in the figure below.

Table 6: The Pearson Correlation between EQ and Self-regulation Factors

	N	Pearson r	p
Emotional intelligence – Goal-setting	81	.66	.04
Emotional intelligence – Self-awareness	81	.71	.00
Emotional intelligence – Self-monitoring	81	.76	.00
Emotional intelligence – Self-evaluation	81	.69	.01

Table 6 shows that the observed correlation coefficient for goal setting (r=.66, p-value=.04), self-awareness (r=.71, p-value=.00), self-monitoring (r=.76, p-value=.00) and self-evaluation (r=.69, p-value=.01) are all statistically significant and it can be concluded that the null hypothesis mentioned above is rejected regarding all the four components of self-regulation since the observed p value is smaller than .05. In other words, there is a positive correlation between self-regulation in terms of all its four components and emotional intelligence. Moreover, table 6 shows that among the four components of self-regulation, as measured by this questionnaire, self-monitoring and self-awareness have the highest correlations respectively. Self-evaluation and goal setting are at the following ranks.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter covered a full report of the analysis of the quantitative data obtained from the two questionnaires — one measuring the teacher's emotional intelligence and the other one teacher's self-regulation. The results of the correlation analysis done above showed that the there is a significant correlation between self-regulation and emotional intelligence of the teachers. Considering the past studies, for example, the ones done by Perels *et al.,* (2009) and Ley and Young (2001) self-regulation of the students are considered a key to their success. Furthermore, Howse, Lange, Farran, and Boyles (2003) and Howse *et al.,* (2003) suggested that students best master self-regulation when teachers or adults modeled self-regulation behaviors or rewarded these behaviors before students. These research studies prove the importance and the critical role of the practice of self-regulation behaviors of the teachers when instructing students in EFL classes. The role of modeling self-regulation is also proved to be significant by Orange (1999).

Considering the importance of teacher modeling in the learners' achievement and raising EFL learners' self-regulation it seems necessary to explore the factors affecting teacher's self-regulation as emphasized by Casler (2005) and Capa-Aydin, Sungur, and Uzuntiryaki (2009). This study probed emotional intelligence as a factor which is linked to teacher's self-regulation. Considering the past research on the role of teacher's emotional intelligence, for example the one done by Saeldi and Nikou (2012) it can be concluded that

teacher's emotional intelligence has a positive correlation with EFL students' positive attitude to them and ass© this variable —correlation emotional intelligence has a positive relation with the EFL learners' achievement. Considering these facts together, it can be concluded that developing teachers' emotional intelligence may lead to increase in the probability of development of teacher self-regulation in an EFL context. This may in turn lead to a change in learners' attitudes to the teacher, or motivation to attend the class more seriously and therefore,develop their self-regulation through modeling their teacher.

Although the rational stated here is rather hypothetical it can be proposed that teachers' independence, interpersonal relationship, empathy and optimism as the elements of emotional intelligence may be the factors that may affect the students' attitudes toward the teacher and makes it more positive as the course goes on. On the other hand the realization of self-actualization, self-regard, impulse control, flexibility, responsibility, and assertiveness as other elements of emotional intelligence in teachers' with higher EQ also affect the students to develop their self-regulation through following the role model — the EFL teacher — and therefore, develop their own self-regulation. Considering the large body of research on teacher education, few, if any, studies were interested in probing the link between teacher's self-regulation and their EQ. considering the fact that teachers must learn and apply new skills to reduce the effects of negative stress, to establish and build positive and supportive relationships, and to develop emotional intelligence of their learners, there is a need to develop their own EQ along with other individual variables. Healthy classroom environments minimize negative stress and contribute to more effective student learning. Most of the scholars on this topic pinpoint the fact that in order to function to the potential as a member of society, EQ is necessary (Gardner, 1983; Goleman, 1995; Mayer and Salovey, 1995; Salovey and Mayer, 1990).

CONCLUSION

The current study did its best to probe the relationship between EFL teachers' emotional intelligence and their self-regulation. EQ is considered to be as important as IQ for people to succeed in language learning and in life. It is important, then, for EFL teachers to consider if they need EQ skills to be applied into the classroom environment for the academic achievement as well as social and emotional success of learners. A positive relationship between the teacher and the learner seems to be vital if students are supposed to be successful. When students perceive their teachers' self-regulation as a sincere interest' helping them to succeed, the motivational and emotional impact of the feedback tends to be more positive. An important factor in teacher's EQ is how they can manage their own emotions, especially the negative ones and regulate their behavior. To this end, this study investigated the link between EQ self-regulation as one of the lye factors successful language teachers. The results obtained from quantitative data analysis showed that there exists a positive significant relationship between these two variables. That is, it can be concluded that developing and investing on EFL teacher's self-regulation may in turn lead to increased teacher self-regulation.

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