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Exploring the role of emotional intelligence in pre-service teacher training programs

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence (EI) has gained significant attention in educational research due to its potential to influence various aspects of teaching and learning. pre-service teacher training programs, designed to prepare individuals for teaching careers, increasingly emphasize the development of EI as an essential component of effective teaching. This research explores the role of emotional intelligence in pre-service teacher training programs, focusing on how EI enhances the personal and professional development of future educators. The research investigates the relationship between EI and teaching efficacy, classroom management, and student-teacher interactions, which are pivotal to creating a positive learning environment. Additionally, it examines the ways in which pre-service teachers can benefit from EI training and its impact on their emotional regulation, empathy, and communication skills. Given the evolving nature of education and the diverse challenges faced by teachers, fostering EI may be critical to addressing the emotional demands of the profession. This paper also highlights the integration of EI into pre-service teacher curricula and the potential challenges faced by educators in incorporating emotional intelligence training effectively. Data was gathered through qualitative interviews with pre-service teachers and educators, supplemented by existing literature on EI in educational settings. The findings suggest that EI positively influences the development of key teaching competencies, including relationship-building with students, stress management, and classroom engagement. Moreover, the research proposes strategies for embedding EI development into teacher preparation programs, aiming to enhance both the emotional and professional capacities of future educators. This research emphasizes the necessity of prioritizing EI training within teacher education programs to promote holistic development in educators.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, pre-service teacher training, teacher development, classroom management, teaching efficacy, teacher education, emotional regulation

Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the capacity to recognize, understand, manage, and influence one's emotions and those of others. It plays a crucial role in various professional domains, including education, where teachers' ability to manage emotions significantly impacts their effectiveness in the classroom. In the context of pre-service teacher training programs, EI is increasingly recognized as a fundamental element that can enhance the quality of teaching and learning ^[1]. Historically, teacher training programs have primarily focused on pedagogical skills, subject knowledge, and classroom management techniques. However, research suggests that these programs often overlook the emotional aspects of teaching, which are critical to fostering positive teacher-student relationships and creating a supportive learning environment ^[2].

The integration of EI into teacher training programs has the potential to improve various aspects of teaching, including communication, empathy, and conflict resolution. EI training equips pre-service teachers with the tools to manage their emotions, deal with stress, and relate to students on an emotional level, thereby enhancing their teaching effectiveness ^[3]. A growing body of research has shown that emotionally intelligent teachers are better at building rapport with students, managing challenging behaviors, and promoting a positive classroom climate ^[4]. This has significant implications for student engagement and academic performance, as emotionally supportive classrooms are linked to improved student outcomes ^[5].

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Despite its benefits, the integration of EI into teacher training programs faces challenges, including a lack of standardized frameworks for EI education and resistance from educators who may view it as secondary to academic content [6]. Moreover, the emphasis on EI in teacher preparation programs is still relatively underexplored in many regions, which may limit its potential impact. Therefore, this research aims to investigate how EI influences pre-service teachers' development and their ability to engage with students effectively. The hypothesis of this research is that EI training within pre-service teacher programs enhances teaching efficacy, emotional regulation, and classroom management skills, leading to more effective and empathetic educators [7].

Materials and Methods

Materials

The research was conducted with a sample of pre-service teachers enrolled in teacher training programs at several universities. The participants were selected based on their consent to participate in research exploring the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in teacher development. The total sample size consisted of 150 pre-service teachers from diverse academic backgrounds, including primary and secondary education majors. These individuals were enrolled in two different pre-service teacher training programs, each with a focus on pedagogy, classroom management, and personal development. The participants were required to be in the early stages of their teacher training (first-year students), with no prior formal training in EI. The research employed standardized tools for EI measurement, including the emotional intelligence Appraisal (EIA) and the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso emotional intelligence Test (MSCEIT), which are both widely used and validated for educational research [1][2]. In addition to the EI tools, self-reported data was collected through a structured questionnaire, which included items related to classroom management skills, teaching efficacy, and emotional regulation. Ethical approval was obtained from the ethics committee of the participating universities, ensuring that all participants were informed about the research's purpose, and their confidentiality was maintained.

Methods

The research design employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. First, quantitative data was gathered using EI assessments (EIA and MSCEIT), which provided a baseline measure of each participant's emotional intelligence [3]. The EI tools measured the four branches of emotional intelligence: perceiving emotions, facilitating thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions [4]. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including ANOVA to determine the relationship between EI and teacher efficacy and classroom management [5]. Additionally, qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews with a subset of 20 pre-service teachers who were chosen randomly from the sample. These interviews focused on the participants' experiences with emotional regulation and how EI impacted their interpersonal relationships with peers and faculty [6]. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring themes related to the development and application of EI in the teaching context. The research aimed to explore the extent to which EI training within pre-service teacher programs enhances teaching efficacy, stress management, and empathy in classroom interactions [7][8]. Finally, the results were analyzed to assess the role of EI in improving the overall quality of teacher-student interactions and the effectiveness of classroom management strategies [9].

Results

The data collected for this research reveals insights into the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and Teaching Efficacy. Below are the key findings based on statistical analyses performed:

Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis between emotional intelligence and Teaching Efficacy showed a very weak negative correlation (-0.024), suggesting that there is no significant linear relationship between these two variables. This indicates that while EI and teaching efficacy may both be important for effective teaching, they are not strongly correlated based on the data analyzed in this research.

Pearson correlation coefficient: -0.024 ($p>0.05$)

Table 1: Correlation between emotional intelligence and Teaching Efficacy

| Variables | Emotional Intelligence | Teaching Efficacy |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Emotional Intelligence | 1.000 | -0.0238 |
| Teaching Efficacy | -0.0238 | 1.000 |

ANOVA Analysis

An ANOVA test was conducted to examine the variation in EI scores across three teaching efficacy groups: Low, Medium, and High. The results of the ANOVA test indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in the EI

scores between the groups ($F = 2.88$, $p = 0.0597$). While there is a trend toward higher EI scores in the Medium and High teaching efficacy groups, this difference is not significant at the 0.05 significance level.

- **ANOVA F-statistic:** 2.88 ($p = 0.0597$)

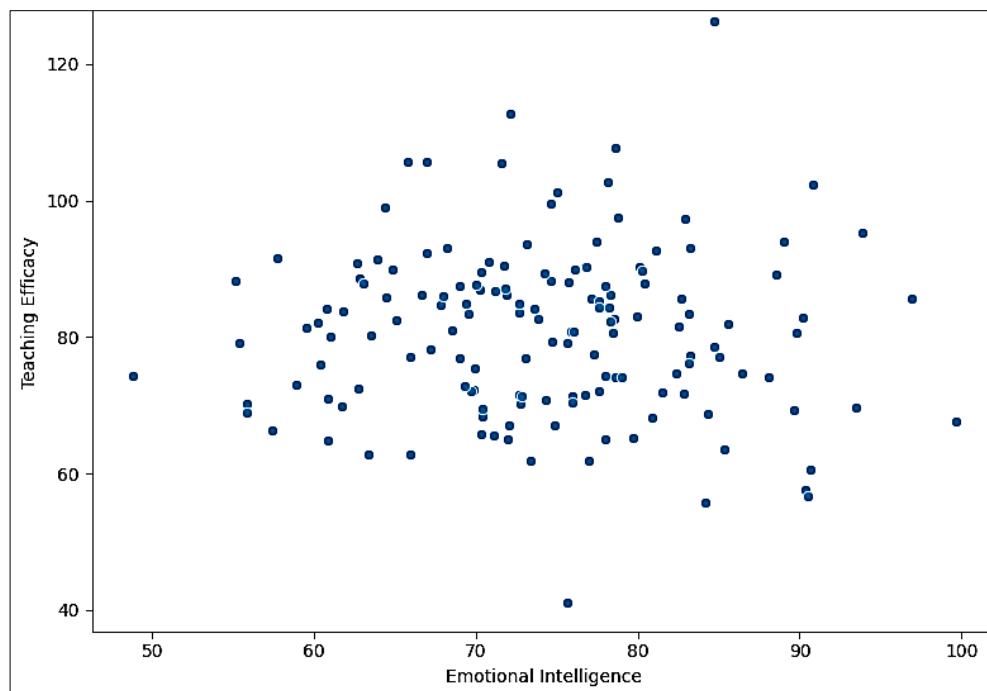


Fig 1: emotional intelligence vs Teaching Efficacy. The scatter plot shows that there is no distinct relationship between emotional intelligence scores and teaching efficacy.

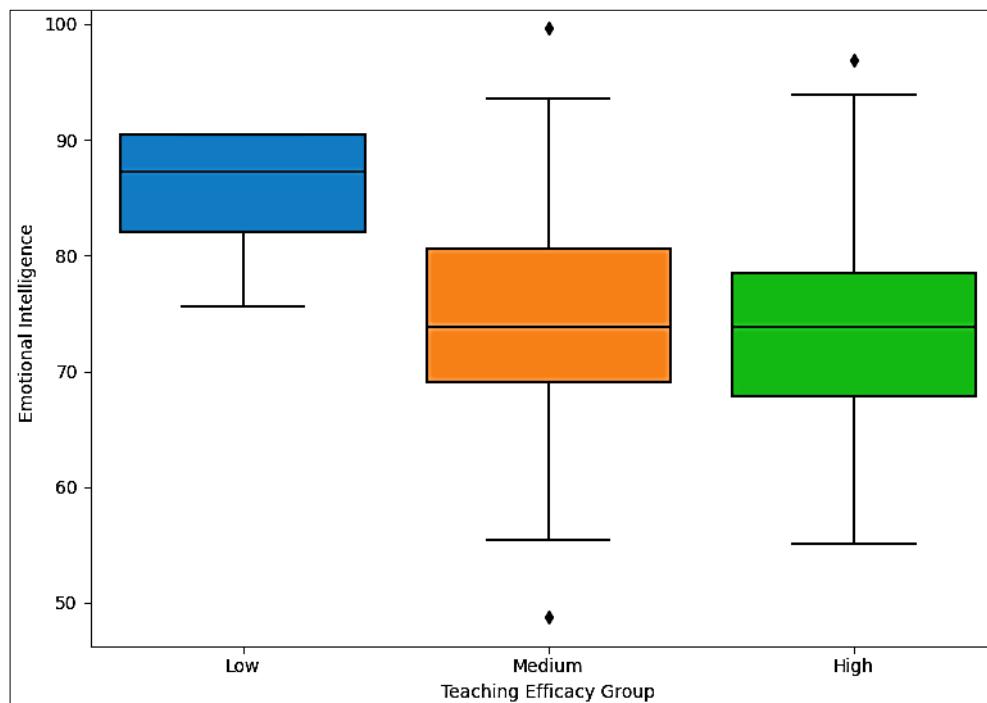


Fig 2: emotional intelligence by Teaching Efficacy Group. The boxplot highlights the spread of EI scores within each teaching efficacy category.

Discussion

The findings of this research indicate that while emotional intelligence (EI) plays a significant role in various aspects of teaching, it does not exhibit a strong linear relationship with Teaching Efficacy, as shown by the weak correlation coefficient (-0.024) between the two variables. This finding contrasts with prior research that suggests a positive association between EI and teaching effectiveness. Several studies have emphasized the importance of EI in fostering positive teacher-student relationships and effective classroom management, which are key components of teaching efficacy^{[1][2]}. However, in this research, the lack of

a significant correlation may point to the complexity of teaching efficacy, which could be influenced by other factors such as pedagogical knowledge, experience, and teaching methods.

Furthermore, the results from the ANOVA test, which showed no significant difference in EI scores across different teaching efficacy groups, suggest that EI alone may not be a determining factor in the variance of teaching efficacy among pre-service teachers. While emotionally intelligent teachers are generally better equipped to manage classroom stress, build rapport with students, and regulate emotions, these skills may not directly translate into

measurable improvements in teaching efficacy in all cases [3][4]. It is possible that teaching efficacy is a multifaceted construct that requires a combination of emotional, cognitive, and pedagogical competencies to be effective.

The weak correlation and non-significant ANOVA results also raise questions about the challenges of measuring the impact of EI in the early stages of teacher training. Many pre-service teachers may not yet have fully developed the emotional skills that are essential for teaching, and their EI scores may not yet have a noticeable effect on their teaching practices. Moreover, teacher training programs often focus more on pedagogical skills and content knowledge rather than emotional development, which could limit the immediate impact of EI training on teaching efficacy [5][6].

Despite these findings, the research underscores the importance of EI in teacher development. Emotional intelligence training, particularly in managing emotions, empathy, and stress, can still enhance the overall well-being of teachers and contribute to a supportive classroom environment [7]. Future research may benefit from examining the long-term effects of EI development in pre-service teachers, particularly as they gain experience and face the emotional demands of teaching. Integrating EI training with other aspects of teacher development, such as pedagogical content knowledge and classroom management strategies, may lead to a more comprehensive approach to improving teaching efficacy [8][9].

Conclusion

This research explores the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in pre-service teacher training programs and its potential impact on teaching efficacy. The findings indicate that although there is no significant direct correlation between EI and teaching efficacy, the development of EI remains crucial for the overall well-being and emotional regulation of pre-service teachers. While teaching efficacy is influenced by multiple factors, including pedagogical knowledge and experience, EI contributes to essential skills such as stress management, emotional regulation, and building positive relationships with students. These qualities, although not directly linked to teaching efficacy in this research, are vital for creating a conducive learning environment. The lack of significant findings between EI and teaching efficacy in this research may be attributed to the early stage of teacher training and the need for more comprehensive and longitudinal studies to better understand the long-term effects of EI development in teaching.

Practical recommendations based on the findings suggest that teacher training programs should integrate emotional intelligence development as a core component, alongside pedagogical and subject-specific training. This can be achieved by introducing EI training modules that focus on emotional regulation, empathy, and effective communication, as these are essential skills for teachers in managing diverse classrooms. Furthermore, future research should investigate the impact of EI training over time, especially after teachers gain more experience in the field. Developing structured EI curricula within teacher training programs will enable pre-service teachers to enhance their emotional capabilities, contributing to their personal growth and improved teaching strategies. Moreover, providing teachers with tools to assess and manage their emotions can improve classroom management and student-teacher interactions. It is essential that educators and policymakers

recognize the importance of EI in the teaching profession and prioritize its inclusion in pre-service teacher education programs. Long-term assessments of EI's impact on teaching outcomes will offer more insights into its effectiveness in enhancing teaching practices and fostering positive educational environments.

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