

## **Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor of Teacher Engagement in Classroom**

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed at predicting the teacher engagement level in classroom through emotional intelligence in government secondary schools. Emotional intelligence helps to know emotions which are helping to spend life more easily and happily and such type of people are more satisfied than other people. This study was quantitative in nature and correlational research method was used. Three hundred twenty secondary school teachers were selected through stratified random sampling from five tehsils of Lahore, Pakistan. Data were collected from secondary school teachers by closed-ended questionnaire. Results of the study indicated that emotional intelligence level of the teachers was average and most of the teachers in secondary schools possessed average level emotional intelligence and they engaged students effectively in the classrooms. Perceptions of teachers how they engaged the students in classrooms and to what degree they were emotionally attached with students were identified. Teachers were asked about emotional engagement with school environment, colleagues, students, emotional level in student teacher interaction and impact of the teacher engagement on student achievement. It was concluded that teachers had moderate attachment with school climate, colleagues and students. As a result, these factors led teachers to classroom engagement. It is recommended that government should recruit teachers of high emotional intelligence as a result teachers' classroom engagement can be improved.

**Keywords:** Emotional intelligence, classroom engagement, school climate, student teacher interaction, secondary schools

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## **Introduction**

Emotional intelligence and teacher classroom engagement has been discussed briefly in this research paper. Many studies have been done on emotional intelligence and it became an important psychological concept (Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2011). Emotional intelligence was used in incidental fashion in literacy criticism and after two decades this term was used most frequently in research articles. With the passage of time, more articles were written to define, explore and measure the term emotional intelligence and many theories were developed about emotional intelligence (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004). This concept emerged when social trends neglected the emotions and efforts were on the rise for the self-assessment of the people. Educationists take emotional intelligence test as important to look at or predict the abilities of the people. So, this field is very important for the improvement of society for knowing the importance of the emotions in our daily life. Advocates of emotional intelligence state that the people who know their emotions can spend their life more easily and happily and such type of people are more satisfied than other people (Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2011).

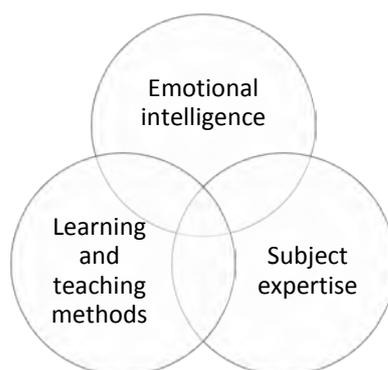
Many of the researchers take emotional intelligence as an important indicator in occupational and professional fields of education. Emotional intelligence leads to valuable life if teacher knows how to take advantage of this skill. For academic excellence, teachers need to understand difference between cognitive and emotional intelligence but they must focus on emotional literacy of their students and teachers' emotional literacy will show when teachers check their own emotional literacy (Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2011).

Emotionally intelligent teachers show care for students, create emotional climate in classroom that develops the student learning environment and helps the teachers to become more effective to ensure academic achievement. It has been seen that teacher's emotional intelligence affects their comfort level, self-efficacy, job satisfaction level and enhances social relationship with students. As a result, emotional intelligence directly affects the teaching and learning process (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Working on classroom emotions has become vital now-a-days for students' emotional positive growth or for positive academic achievement. It is hoped that the successful teachers have high level of emotional competencies. Emotional intelligence forecast positive and successful results in all fields of life and consequently it dominates all fields of education. Teachers need to be trained in emotional intelligence to manage their own emotions for helping students. This makes emotional intelligence has become important for both teachers and students (Singh, 2015).

### **Role of Emotional Intelligence in Teaching**

The role of emotional intelligence is very prodigious in educational field and in teaching. Emotional intelligence helps the teachers to understand their students in a better way. Teachers can make a pedagogical strategy to know the needs of and set goals for their students. In emotional intelligence, empathy is the main idea or concept for teaching and it is significant for the teachers to communicate with students to understand the background and culture of the students. During teaching of different subjects in classroom, motivation and social skills related to emotional intelligence are very helpful for teachers to establish their goals. To improve the social and personal life skills, emotional intelligence can help the students and teachers to enhance their achievements. The educational institutes who give training and conduct seminars for developing emotional intelligence in teachers produce happier more, experienced and mature students for professional life (Brockbank & McGill, 2007).



*Figure 1.* Relation between EI of teachers, learning and teaching methods and subject expertise

It is vital for teachers to understand the emotional sides of learning and they have to do some more work on it. For students' success and achievements, teachers need to use their emotional intelligence in classroom. Unfortunately, many teachers do not know the role of emotional intelligence in academic life. Teachers do not give attention to the emotional intelligence while they are very experienced in their personal life and academic life. For example, to make students attentive in classroom, teachers must call the students by their names. To enhance the feelings of the learners, there must be positive opportunities or interactive emotional learning environment in classrooms. It will improve the experience of both students and their teachers (Hargreaves, 1998).

The teachers can give the students values for their grooming in classroom. For teaching the students, teachers must be expert in their subject process, learning, knowledge of teaching methods material design encourage the learners for learning and use of instructional materials. One of the most important component the teachers bring in the classroom is emotional intelligence. To realize the knowledge, learning, subject matter and teaching pedagogy, teachers must use emotional intelligence in their teaching. Otherwise, value of all things will be reduced (Mortiboys, 2005).

### **Role of Emotional Skills in success of Teacher Education**

Social and emotional competence play vital role in success of teacher education. To make teaching successful, a teacher needs competency of emotional intelligence. Socio-emotional competencies are very important for teacher's professional development, flexibility in education, monitoring of self-performance and controlling emotions to manage the sensitive and practical situations (Frijda, 1999). Teachers must have strong and comprehensive administrative skills. According to the demand of their work, teachers need to be aware of their abilities, responsibilities and role in the academic field. To detect weakness as in their abilities, teachers necessarily need to seek opinion of experts, leaders in the field. To manage the socio emotional development of students effectively, teachers too need a socio emotional competency. To deal with students' behavior problems like bullying, aggression and non-response in classroom, teachers need skills related to socio emotional competencies (Cooper & Travers, 1996).

To become a professional in the educational field, teachers need to be competent in the academic course and programs like early education, special education, primary education and secondary education. In, Griffith University, for professional degree in education, four- years of education is necessary and for professional development, human development, generic study course is taught to pre-service teachers for their interpersonal relationship and management skills. In the last year of the program, pre-service teachers of special education, primary education and secondary education are taught program specific studies related to professional roles, responsibilities and self-management skills to cope up with student behavior. Pre-service teachers need to understand interpersonal and intrapersonal skills before, during, and after completing the courses of study (Davies & Bryer, 2003).

### **Teacher Emotional Training**

The main purpose of education is holistic development of the students. Emotional intelligence develops awareness to observe, ability to control and ability to check emotions. Many researchers discussed that emotional intelligence can increase its power with the passage of time, while others claim that it is an innate quality (Skinner &

Belmont, 1993). In the pursuit of this goal, teachers play a vital role. The main aim of teacher education is to produce effective teachers to improve the quality of education. During teachers training program, the teachers need to be exposed to emotional development program. So, teachers must be emotionally mature enough to deal with the emotional needs of the students. These teacher training programs will help the teachers to become emotionally intelligent with the components of self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy and social skills (Singh, 2015).

### **Teacher Engagement in Classroom**

Teacher engagement can be defined as providing high level of attention to students in learning process and developing such strategies which help the teachers in understanding the student behavior, developing lesson plans, and evaluating the students in classroom (Basikin, 2007). Many teachers who are engaged in classroom, they must have high level of education and their engagement can be seen in classroom practices (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Engaged teachers always search for new and innovative ideas for students and implement them in classroom. Engaged teacher adjusts or changes instructions according to the need of the students in classrooms. Students learning is the responsibility of the engaged teacher besides checking and monitoring the students' progress or achievement from time to time and providing feedback to students (Marzano, 2003).

Teachers who know the importance of the education have positive attitude towards their students and they have higher teacher engagement in classroom. Teachers' classroom engagement directly affects the students' psychological state and classroom environment. Engaged teachers always prepare work before time. It is the teacher who develops belief in students that education is the main stream of life and defines role of the students according to their abilities and aptitude. An engaged teacher knows the importance of his work and how his work or efforts take his students towards success in professional life (Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011).

The teacher student relationship promotes the student engagement and positive students outcomes in classroom. This engagement is helpful for teachers. The teachers who input energy to create active and encouraging relationships with their students' experience higher levels of well-being, and have less emotional burnout and stress. The teachers who are active in classroom will display good behaviors, facilitate students to engage them, that, in turn, will increase students' academic achievement. A teacher who is engaged in classroom and actively involved in developing healthy teacher student relations is an effective teacher. A teacher who shows enthusiasm in improving teaching pedagogy and is responsive to global demands for quality teaching becomes helpful for enriching students' lives.

### **Approaches to Promote Teacher Engagement**

A study was conducted by National Centre on Effective Secondary Schools, Madison to find the teacher engagement level (Newmann, 1992). The survey was conducted to measure the seven indicators of teacher engagement. Level of satisfaction or efficacy, incorporation with staff members, hope for student's achievement, classroom procedure and controlling sense, time for preparing instructions, devoted time to contact with students, variation in teaching procedure and practices. The result of the study was that there are ten variables which directly affect the teacher engagement and success. Namely school experience, ability of students, size of school, urbanity of school, environment of the school, teachers task manageability, innovations in schools and teaching, teacher response in making decisions, sense of communication with others, chances for collaborations with others (Raina & Khatri, 2015). The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of emotional intelligence of teachers and level of teacher engagement in classroom. The main objective was to explore the predictors of teacher engagement in classroom in context of emotional intelligence of teachers.

### **Objectives**

#### **Method**

##### ***Participants***

There are 334 Govt. Secondary Schools in district Lahore and 3298 Secondary school teachers are working in these schools (Government of the Punjab School Education department, 2018). The district Lahore is distributed in five tehsils i.e. Lahore City, Cantt, Model Town, Raiwind and Shalimar. Lahore City consisted of 127 secondary schools, Cantt 46 schools, Model Town 68 schools, Raiwind 26 and Shalimar 67 secondary schools.

##### ***Instruments***

For assessing, emotional intelligence as predictor of teacher engagement in classroom, two closed ended questionnaires were used to gather the data from the respondents. Social Emotional Teacher Rating Scale (SETRC) was used in order to measure Teacher Emotional intelligence (TEI). This scale was developed by Tom in 2012. For this purpose, five Emotional competences were used: Self-Awareness, Self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and decision making and the scale was based on factors Emotional Intelligence, Teacher Burnout, Behavior and Instructional Management School Climate and Teacher Student Interaction factors. This scale was in English and Urdu Languages and consisted of 51 items. Each statement was measured on six points scale.

The second scale was used to measure teacher engagement is Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). This scale was developed by Schaufeli in 2002 and was based on the factors which were body language and behavior, consistent focus, verbal participation, confidence, interest and enthusiasm, individual attention, clarity of teaching and learning, rigorous thinking and student performance. The UWES scale included three dimensions that measured vigor, dedication and absorption with students. This scale was also in English and Urdu Languages and consisted of 20 statements. Each statement was measured on five points scale.

### ***Design***

This study was quantitative and correlational in nature which was appropriate to obtain the clear picture of emotional intelligence as predictor of teacher engagement in classroom. This correlational study focused on the potential use of emotional intelligence in education sector and its effect on classroom engagement. Correlational research was used to assess the relationships between and among two or more variables.

### ***Procedure***

Sample size of the study consisted of 320 secondary school teachers. Secondary school teachers were selected from five tehsils. Stratified proportionate sampling technique was used to select the sample. Thirty secondary schools from Lahore City, 11 secondary schools from Cantt, 17 secondary schools from Model Town, 6 secondary schools from Raiwind and 16 secondary schools from Shalimar tehsil were selected. Four teachers were selected from each school using convenience sampling. The researcher visited each school personally and met with the teachers one to one and managed to get the questionnaires filled by them.

### ***Results***

To explore the level of teacher emotional intelligence and teacher classroom engagement primarily analysis was conducted and mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, and confidence intervals were calculated. The results are presented in following Tables

Table 1  
*Frequency and Percentage of Participants Demographics (N=320)*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age (years)		
25-32	84	26
33-40	87	27
41-50	84	26
>50	65	21
Teaching Experience (Years)		
1-6	80	25
7-13	82	25
14-23	83	26
24+	75	24
Subject		
Science	162	51
Arts	158	49
Gender		
Male	159	50
Female	160	50
Academic Qualification (AQ)		
B.A	48	15
M.A	196	61
M.Phil.	76	24
Professional Qualification (PQ)		
B.Ed.	158	49
M.Ed.	161	50

### ***Teacher Emotional Intelligence level***

Table 2  
*Summary Statistics of Scores on Emotional Intelligence of Teachers (N=320)*

Variable	Scale	M	SD	Skewness (S)	Kurtosis (K)	95% CI	
	Range					LL	UL
Emotional Intelligence	1-6	4.54	.66	-0.34	0.56	4.46	4.61
Teacher Burnout	1-6	4.24	1.00	-0.12	-0.57	4.13	4.35
Behaviour and Instructional Management	1-6	4.80	.65	-0.14	0.67	4.73	4.87
School Climate	1-6	4.83	.74	-0.93	0.12	4.75	4.91
Teacher Student Interaction	1-6	5.07	.68	-0.67	0.87	4.99	5.14

*Note.* CI= confidence interval, M=mean, SD=standard deviation, LL=lower value, UL=upper value.

Table 3  
*Level of Emotional Intelligence of Teachers (N=320)*

	Low level (1-3.5)		Medium level (3.5-4.75)		High level (4.75-6)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Total EI	6	2	142	44	172	54
Emotional Intelligence	20	6	187	58	113	35
Teacher Burnout	87	27	125	39	108	33
Behaviour and Instructional Management	14	4	124	38	182	57
School Climate	11	3	125	39	184	57
Teacher Student Interaction	12	3	71	22	237	74

In all factors of emotional intelligence of teachers, the factor Teacher Student Interaction is the highest and teachers are involved above averagely in Teacher Student Interaction. School Climate is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest and teachers' emotional involvement in School Climate is average, Behavior and Instructional Management is the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest and teachers are emotional involvement in Behaviors and Instructional management is at average level. Emotional Intelligence has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest and teachers have average amount of emotional intelligence. Teacher Burnout is the 5<sup>th</sup> highest and teachers are emotional average involvement in Teacher Burnout is average.

This research also reveals the level of emotional intelligence of teachers in secondary schools, to what degree teachers are emotionally attached with their classroom. Two percent teachers have low Emotional Intelligence, 44% teachers have medium Emotional Intelligence and 54% teachers have high level of emotional intelligence. Twenty-seven percent teachers are less emotional regarding Teacher Burnout, 39% teachers are at medium level emotional regarding Teacher Burnout and 33% teachers are at high emotional level regarding Teacher Burnout. Four percent teachers are less emotional regarding Behavior and Instructional Management, 38% of teachers are medium level emotional regarding Behavior and Instructional Management and 57% teachers are highly emotional regarding Behavior and Instructional Management. Three percent teachers are emotionally low in involved in School Climate, 39% teachers are emotionally at medium level in School Climate and 57% teachers are emotionally high in School Climate. Three percent teachers are low emotional regarding Teacher Student Interaction, 22% teachers are medium level emotional regarding Teacher Student Interaction and 74% teachers are high emotional regarding Teacher Student Interaction.

**Level of teacher engagement in classroom**

Table 4

*Summary Statistics of Scores on Teacher Engagement in Classroom (N= 320)*

Variable	Scale	M	SD	Skewness (S)	Kurtosis (K)	95% CI	
	Range					LL	UL
Body Language and Behaviours	1-5	4.54	.52	-1.09	1.60	4.52	4.63
Consistent Focus	1-5	4.47	.60	-0.91	0.92	4.40	4.53
Verbal Participation	1-5	4.48	.78	-0.98	0.96	4.48	4.57
Confidence	1-5	4.41	.67	-0.61	0.38	4.34	4.48
Interest and Enthusiasm	1-5	4.47	.56	-0.73	0.54	4.41	4.53
Individual Attention	1-5	4.54	.61	-0.81	0.66	4.48	4.61
Rigorous Thinking	1-5	4.51	.75	-0.76	0.60	4.43	4.60
Student Performance	1-5	4.60	.54	-0.63	0.71	4.54	4.66

*Note.* CI= confidence interval, M=mean, SD=standard deviation, LL=lower level, UL= upper level, S=skewness, K=kurtosis

Table 5

*Level of Teacher Engagement in Classroom (N=320)*

	Low Level (1-2.5)		Medium Level (2.5-3.75)		High Level (3.75-5)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
	Total Teacher Engagement	1	.3	21	6	298
Body Language and Behaviour	3	.9	21	6	296	92
Consistent Focus	4	1	29	9	287	89
Verbal Perception	11	3	13	4	296	92
Confidence	6	2	41	12	273	85
Interest and Enthusiasm	2	.6	33	10	285	89
Individual Attention	3	.9	24	7	293	91
Rigorous Thinking	8	3	21	6	290	90
Student Performance	1	.3	17	5	301	94

This research also provides the information about teacher engagement in classroom. The results in table 5 show that teacher involvement is above average on all factors: body language and behavior, consistent focus, verbal perception, confidence, interest and enthusiasm, individual attention, rigorous thinking and student Performance.

This research also provides information about the level of teacher engagement in classroom. Ninety-three percent teachers are highly engaged in classroom, 21% teachers are medium level engaged in classroom and 0.3% teachers are engaged low in classroom. Ninety-two percent teachers are highly engaged in classroom with Body Language and behavior, 22% teachers are engaged medium level in classroom with Body Language and behavior and 0.9% teachers are engaged low in classroom with Body Language and behavior. Eighty-nine percent teachers have high level Consistent Focus in classroom, nine percent teachers have medium level involvement Consistent Focus in classroom and

one percent teacher have low Consistent Focus in classroom. Ninety-two percent teachers are highly engaged in classroom with Verbal Perception, four percent teachers are engaged medium level in classroom with Verbal Perception and 3% teachers are low engaged in classroom with Verbal Perception. Eighty-five percent teachers have high Confidence in classroom, 12% teachers have medium level Confidence in classroom and 2% teachers have low level Confidence in classroom. Eighty-nine percent teachers have high Interest and Enthusiasm in classroom, 10% teachers have medium Interest and Enthusiasm in classroom and 0.6% teachers have low Interest and Enthusiasm in classroom. Ninety teachers give high Individual Attention in classroom, 6% teachers give medium Individual Attention in classroom and 0.9% teachers give low Individual Attention in classroom. The 9% teachers develop high Rigorous Thinking in classroom, 6% teachers develop medium Rigorous Thinking in classroom and 3% teachers develop low Rigorous Thinking in class room. Ninety-four percent teachers are highly involved in checking Student Performance in classroom, 5% teachers are involved medium level in checking Student Performance in class and 0.3% percent teachers are involved low in checking Student Performance in classroom.

***Predicting the impact of emotional intelligence in teacher engagement in classroom: multiple regression***

Multiple regression was used to predict the impact of emotional intelligence factors on teacher engagement. It is used to find out variance in the dependent variable “teacher engagement”, which is explained by independent variables “Emotional Intelligence, Teacher Burnout, Behavior and Instructional Management, School Climate, Teacher Student”. The variance explained by independent variables in dependent variable is 50% ( $R^2=.50$ )

The factor “Teacher burnout” negatively affects the teacher engagement ( $\beta=-0.207$ ,  $t= -2.32$ ,  $p=.001$ ). The factor “Teacher Student Interaction” positively affects the teacher engagement ( $\beta= 0.423$ ,  $t=4.36$ ,  $p=.001$ ).

Table 5

*Predicting the Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Teacher Engagement in Classroom (N=320)*

Factors for Emotional Intelligence	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p
Emotional Intelligence	0.063	0.047	0.086	1.32	0.180
Teacher Burnout	-0.099	0.030	-0.207	-2.32	0.001
Behaviour and Instructional Management	-0.029	0.068	-0.039	-0.42	0.670
School Climate	0.094	0.058	0.146	1.62	0.100
Teacher Student Interaction	0.298	0.068	0.423	4.36	0.001
$R^2$	0.50				
F	21.2				

SE= standard error,  $\beta$ = Beta

## **Discussion**

The main objective of this study was to find impact of teachers' emotional intelligence on their classroom engagement at secondary school level. It is found on the basis of analysis that on the factor "Teacher Student Interaction", teachers' level of engagement in class was above average, but it was at average level on the factors "School Climate" and "Behavior and Instructional Management". Further, the analysis shows that on the last factor "Teacher Burnout", teachers have average amount of emotional engagement in the classroom. These results of the study are supported by the study of Singh (2015). His research gives the results that teachers are emotionally involved with their students in all situations and students' better performance in classroom is related to teachers' emotional intelligence. Teachers manage their feelings and emotions in healthy ways with students and they remain calm when sometimes students misbehave with them in certain situations and do not turn reactive.

This research reveals that teachers are highly concerned with student's performance in classroom and they show maximum concern to give individual attention to students in the classroom. To make interaction with students in the classroom, teachers mostly use their body language and positive behavior e.g. walk around in the class keeping eyes on students' work. Most of the teachers focus on student learning with maximum interaction in classroom and provide safe, respectful and supportive learning environment to students. But the teachers with average level of emotional intelligence develop rigorous thinking in the students. Teachers feel comfortable when students ask questions and in turn teachers feel knowledgeable. It helps to develop deeper thinking and understanding in students related to their subject matter. The results of this study are supported by Klassen, Yerdelen, and Durksen (2013).

## **Conclusion**

The study concludes that teacher engagement levels are associated with teacher engagement factors. Besides this, teachers' social engagement with students and colleagues is an important dimension for teachers' engagement in classroom. The study, however, recommends to explore the relationship of teachers' emotional intelligence and classroom engagement with a mixed design study to triangulate the results with contextual factors such as teachers' job satisfaction, professional training in student counselling, knowledge of psychology of learning and the like in addition to learners' motivation and attitude to the subjects they study and the learning environment of the class and ethos of their school.

## Recommendations

The study strongly recommends to offer courses and sessions on student guidance and counselling currently being ignored in all tiers of education at cost of giving undue attention to content memorization in a robotic style. The teachers and all stakeholders in school education should give adequate space to co-curricular activities for emotional well-being of both teachers and the taught.

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